

[P. 165-C]

Among Putnam's net hunters, a more frequent use of skin, of late, has been in the form of a sling for carrying babies, but this is still rare. 237 854

Clay and stone are likewise ignored as possible raw materials, nor are there any reports that the Mbuti worked metal at any time. Apart from an exceptional case among the net hunters, quoted by Schebesta (1933), such metal as they require for knife and ax blades, and for arrow and spearheads, they obtain already worked from the villagers. 325 317 316 377 411 412 439

If the villager supplies the handle as well as the triangular blade, Putnam (1948, 326) writes that the invariable method of hafting is to burn a hole through the wood to take the narrow end of the blade. If the blade alone is supplied, the Pygmy takes a thin sapling or a light branch, splits it, and, without removing the bark, lashes the blade in place with twine or rattan. If a Pygmy is using an ax up in a tree, he will always choose one of his own hafting, because it is lighter. Both men and women use these axes. Putnam (1948, 326) writes that they never use adzes, which are the chief tools of the village woodworkers. 412 284

[ARCHERS]

[P.167-C]
ground on four short forked branches. More 352
often the sticks, or simply leaves, are laid on
the ground to make a bed. There may also be a
wooden stool, given by or stolen from the vil-
lagers, or a rough chair made from stout sap-
lings lashed together with vine. Meat-drying 417
racks (Fig. 12) are built over smouldering fires 251
to preserve meat for barter.

UTENSILS

Cooking utensils, clay pots, and heavy 415
wooden mortars are obtained from the villagers 412
(Fig. 4). The first-mentioned are never made by 177
the Mbuti, but Schebesta says that many [439] .
archers now make mortars for themselves.
There may also be wooden plates of village
origin, baskets, and basketry winnowing trays.
All metal knife and ax blades (Figs. 13-14) also 412
come from the villagers, and, like the cooking 177
utensils, these foreign importations are said to [439]
have become indispensable to the archers.

[ARCHERS]

[P. 169-A]

302 barks. The preparation of the dyes and the
382 painting of the geometric designs are a woman's
[462] art.

CARE OF BODY

515 Schebesta says that bodily care is very much neglected among the Mbuti. He agrees with and quotes Stuhlmann (1894) who writes that the Pygmies are exceptionally dirty and are afraid of water. Schebesta also mentions the fondness of the Mbuti for rubbing oil into the skin.

DOMESTIC ANIMALS

231
• [439] The hunting dog (Efe: *ebb*) is the sole domestic animal. Schebesta says that all Mbuti maintain hunting dogs, bought from villagers or
[534] acquired by trade. These dogs are mute; hence the need for dog bells, made by the Pygmies themselves and hung around the dog's neck (Fig. 7i).

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
 Mbuti
 Bira FO11



FIG. 5. Household utensils made from clay, Bira villagers, Central Ituri. a. Pipestem and clay bowl. b. Cooking vessel. The Mbuti obtain their major pottery artifacts, as luxuries, from their villager neighbors.

P
 [439] •
 B23

1: Turnbull E-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4

Mbuti

Bira FO11

[ARCHERS]

[P.174-A]

B
P
411
284

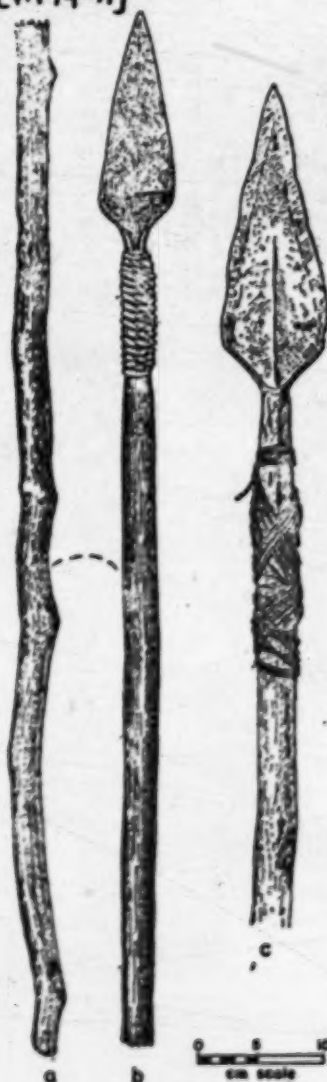


FIG. 10. Hunting equipment, archers, Central Ituri. a-b. Spear, of village origin and villager hafted; probably Bira. c. Spear, hafted by Mbuti. All blades for spears come from the villagers, though Mbuti frequently rehaft spear, ax, and adze blades, to suit their needs.

[ARCHERS]

[P.174-8]



285
252

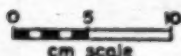


FIG. 11. Fruit press, archers, Kilo District, East Ituri. An unusual utensil, found in the hunting camp of an eastern archer band, used for extracting juice.

GATHERING

Meat, however, forms only about 30 per cent of the diet (Schebesta, 1941, 11). The archers' staple is essentially vegetarian, and this is provided almost exclusively by women. First place goes to the plantains, sweet potatoes, and peanuts acquired from the villagers in return for meat or service. But the forest itself provides an abundance of roots, vegetables, fruits, nuts, and edible fungi, all of which the Pygmy uses. Schebesta gives no details as to the exact proportions of these various foodstuffs consumed, so it is impossible to get any idea of the dietetics of this group. He also mentions the place of snails and grubs, termites and ants, larvae, and certain types of snake in the diet. Fish form only a small part of the diet, but the womenfolk catch crabs and small fish in the shallow streams, using their hands or small nets.

262

[462]

[439] •

[226]

1: Turnbull E-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[ARCHERS]

HONEY GATHERING

Honey gathering is of particular importance and is seasonal. The equipment consists of fire, [222]
[221]
[TEXT CONTINUES ON P. 175-B]



FIG. 12. Meat-drying rack, archers, Central and East Ituri. Meat drying takes place only when the Mbuti intend to trade with villagers and is by no means a part of every hunting camp. [439] •
[P. 174-C]

[ARCHERS]

262 [P. 176-A]
boos, mostly acquired during initiation, not connected with the clan totem. These two classes of taboos are responsible for what food restrictions there are.

TRADE

433 The food quest is, in Schebesta's words, the
439 alpha and omega of Mbuti economy. It is a
177 day-to-day economy. The supposed uncertainty
22 of adequate supply is given as the reason for the
alleged dependency of the Mbuti on the villagers. At times the Mbuti have no food; at others, they have an excess. But living in a symbiotic relationship with the villagers, the Pygmies are able to maintain a steady diet, relying on the villagers in times of shortage and in times of plenty supplying them with forest produce. According to Schebesta, their relationship is based on this exchange. The Pygmy not only has come to rely on village plantations to supplement his own inadequate diet, but he has come to rely on villager-manufactured tools and utensils. Jadin (1936) says that the Pygmies know no resources other than those available through hunting and gathering, despite villager domination.

[ARCHERS]

- 439 This trade relationship has been noticed by
177 many of the earlier travelers, some of whom
referred to it as "silent trade" (notably Bur-
rows, 1898), while others found it to be quite
open (Lloyd, 1899). But Schebesta (1941) is
[114] inconsistent in attributing it to the inadequacy
of the environment, which, in the same work, he
claims is responsible, through its very abun-
dance, for the lack of advance in Pygmy cul-
ture. Nor does he indicate precisely how the
trading is carried out. He says that there is,
[613] however, a definite hereditary relationship
between Efe archer and Lese villager lineages.

SOCIAL LIFE

594

FAMILY ORGANIZATION

- [342] Individual families each have their own bee-
hive- or tunnel-shaped hut, a stick frame hung
with phrynium leaves (p. 167). Schebesta (1933,
219-220; 1952, 154) reports once having seen a
gigantic windscreen housing several families in
an otherwise normal camp. Although each
[621] family emphasizes its individuality by separate
residence, as a social unit it is far less significant
[613] than the band (a patrilineage, according to
Schebesta) of which it is a part and outside
which it could not exist.

[P. 176-B]

[ARCHERS]

Philters are also used by Mbuti girls. One further possible obstacle to marriage, outside normal rules of exogamy, exists among the archers: marriage is prohibited between two bands associated by common marriage ties with a third band. Thus if Bands A and B habitually marry with Band C, then intermarriage between Bands A and B is forbidden.² Restrictions on marrying into one's matrilineage apply only to the first generation; a child may not marry into its mother's band. 000
582
621

A number of early sources mention marriage by purchase (Casati, 1891; Stuhlman, 1894; Burrows, 1898). Czekanowski (1924), relying on information from neighboring villager tribes, writes of marriage both by purchase and by service and apparently learned nothing of marriage by exchange among the Mbuti. Schebesta (1948, 366) writes that, while marriage by purchase is the custom among the village tribes of the Ituri, Mbuti marriage is distinguished by being essentially by sister exchange. Otherwise the man may offer a quiver of arrows, five chickens, and 10 hoes (cited for *Eba-eba* camp); and among the southern archers chickens, hoes, spears, and arrows are used—all obtained from the villagers by begging or by trade, never money. The archers of Banyari, on the edge of 583
[191]
[439] •

² It should be remembered that all the time Schebesta is thinking of the *Lokalgruppe*, or band, primarily as a patrilineage. [613]

[P. 180-D]

183 (B)

[ARCHERS]

P Schebesta (1948, 545) cites this burial as evi-
 M dence of band and lineal solidarity (e.g., the
 764 prominent part played by neighboring bands in
 177 the funeral), and of the importance of the *karé*
 171 relationship. Significant differences between
 P the Mbuti and the Lese ceremonies were the
 621 absence, in the archer funeral, of the sacrifice of
 628 a hen over the grave, the absence of the official
 633 mourners in their clothes and white paint, of a
 M goat offering, and above all of the absence of a
 182 long palaver, following the burial, to place the
 161 blame for the death. The question of blame did
 arise after the Mbuti burial described, but it
 was the Lese who were primarily interested.
 Nor, according to Schebesta, does a death have
 such far-reaching social consequences among
 the archers as among their villager neighbors.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Z
 P The relationship between the Efe archers and
 177 their villager neighbors is mentioned above.
 439 The two peoples are associated in a hereditary
 608 system, based on trade, strengthened by the

Mbuti

Zaire FO1

[ARCHERS]

[P.183-C]

karé relationship, and the practice of joint initiation and circumcision.

Among themselves the archers also practice a form of blood brotherhood, but the two major bonds are membership in the same economic local band and membership (with much wider extension) in the same secret society which the archers call *toré*. Schebesta (1948, 290) points out that a sense of tribal identity is totally lacking, that "clans" are dispersed and have neither political nor economic significance, and that even lineages, which in effect are the local hunting bands, are usually most properly viewed as economic entities. He gives neither genealogies nor any indication of any complex system of kinship terminology, nor any other evidence that kinship ties might be of extensive importance. There is even little evidence to support his allegation that the hunting band is a lineal entity. It appears throughout that the major unifying factor is one of common residence.

Z
P
177
439
608
P
621
602
[608]
[575]
[61]

P
621
602
114

P
[591]

Mbuti

Zaire FO1

[ARCHERS]

Costermans further agrees with Junker (1889-1891, vol. 3, 92) that many of the northern archers have recently themselves taken to a system of chieftainship. They lead their nomadic existence under the jurisdiction of a chief and in every way preserve their freedom under this jurisdiction. If there is any disagreement, however, they leave and place themselves under a neighboring chief. But not nearly enough information is given for any understanding of the structure of this "system."

Schebesta seems to stand between the two extremes with regard to the archers whom he studied. He stresses the economic dependency of the Mbuti on the villagers, and also, as does Putnam (1948), the personal aspect of the relationship. He does not agree with Costermans that the archers change their allegiance at the slightest provocation. He regards the *nkumbi*, with its creation of *kari* relationships between individual Mbuti and villagers, as a major factor in maintaining villager authority over the archers and rendering the latter dependent on their *lese* neighbors.

[P. 185-D]

P
622
184
178
621

P
439
177
571
[14]

P
[881]
[608]

[NET HUNTERS] The relation of the huts to one another in the circle is dictated, as much as anything, by the friendship of the women. (Their gathering activities do not demand cooperation, but Putnam says that they help one another for company, forming work groups of two or more adult women.)

There are frequent visitors to these camps, including villagers who come to claim, trade, or buy meat from the Pygmies. If a villager chief comes, a special hut is built for him.

FURNITURE

The furnishings of a hut are similar to those described by Schebesta, and, like the archers, these net hunters keep their possessions to the minimum (Figs. 18-20). Leaves are used as furniture more frequently than either beds or stick chairs. The Pygmy will not sit on bare ground, and if a log is not available he will use a piece of bark or a leaf.

UTENSILS

Also as with the archers, utensils are largely borrowed or stolen from the villagers who make them (Fig. 21). The net hunters do not imitate their neighbors, however, to the extent of making mortars for themselves. If they possess mortars, they are extremely small, unlike the large ones described by Schebesta, which could not easily be carried from camp to camp by a

[P. 195-B]
[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 197-A]

[NET HUNTERS]



FIG. 21. Household utensils of metal, Bira villagers, Central Ituri. a. Machete, used for cutting large saplings such as those required for village houses. b. Cooking vessel (trade), needed for the cooking of village foods, such as rice, requiring boiling. c. Comb. Another villager use of metal that finds favor among the Mbuti. d. Cooking vessel. e. Knife. f. Knife, used mainly, and widely, by Mbuti women for food preparation and for the preparation of roofing leaves. These are the common household utensils of metal that might be found in any net-hunting camp.

[P.196-B]

[NET HUNTERS]

[P. 197-A]

- 412 truly nomadic group. All metal knife and ax
• 439 blades are obtained ready-made from the vil-
lagers, also metal arrow and spearheads (which
are frequently used as knives). The hafting and
fitting of shafts may be done by the Pygmy
himself, and certainly the arrow shafts are
285 Pygmy-made. Open-mesh baskets (Fig. 41) are
439 made by the women, who also obtain close-mesh
baskets (Fig. 42) from the villagers.

DRESS AND ORNAMENTATION

- 291 Clothing of the net hunters is also similar to
[1989] that described by Schebesta, but with less orna-
mentation of fur and skin and less use of charms
and amulets. Putnam denies the use of skins for
clothing among the Pygmies he knows. Anne
287 Putnam ranks the manufacture of barkcloth as
the major industry in a net-hunting camp,
occupying even more time than the making and
286 repair of nets. Putnam once said that the Pyg-
mies did not make nets, but obtained them from
the villagers; later, he changed his opinion.¹ A
net is never made complete, but in the course of
repair pieces are added or removed to start a
new net.

[NET HUNTERS]

en. The making of barkcloth and netting, and 462
the painting of designs on cloth and body, are
individual skills which are utilized for the
craftsman himself or for his immediate family.
Women living in adjoining huts sometimes ex- [476]
change their skills in body painting, exercising [571]
their art on one another.

ECONOMIC LIFE

HUNTING

Like Schebesta, Putnam stresses hunting and 224
gathering as the basis of Mbuti economy. Put- 433
nam (1948, 327) also states that hunting is the 439.
principal means by which the Pygmy-villager 177
relationship is maintained. Although there is [222]
little division of labor among the Mbuti them- [463]
selves, he (1948, 328) says in a sense that they
are all specialists in hunting, so there is a divi-
sion of labor between Pygmy and village groups,
the two together forming a larger economic en-
tity. The villager may do some hunting, but [171]
largely by means of traps, deadfalls, and pits.
It occupies little of his time and is not very pro-
ductive. For the Pygmy, hunting is a full-time
occupation.

[P. 201-D]

[NET HUNTERS]

[P.202-A]

281

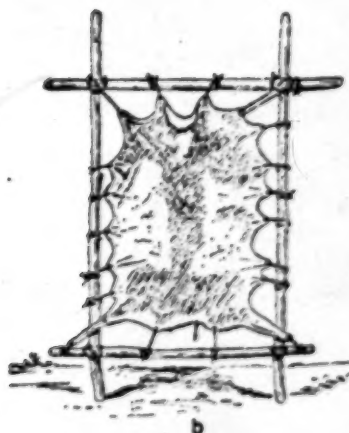


FIG. 32. Methods of stretching hides to dry, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri. Hides, little used by the net hunters except as baby slings and, more rarely, as quivers, are good trade items that are needed by villagers, among other things, for drum-heads.

[237]
[439]

[NET HUNTERS]

[P. 205-8]

Elephant hunting is important in the Epulu District. Certain bands of Pygmies are specialists. Among the local net-hunting band from which the most detailed information is available, however, four out of 12 or 15 hunters are elephant hunters. Putnam says that the present form of elephant hunting is a recent development in answer to the needs of the villagers whose plantations were continually being ravaged by elephants and who encouraged the Pygmies to kill them off. In the early days the villagers had little use for the tusks, other than as barkcloth beaters, but with the advent of

224

[178]

[237]

[439]

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 206-8]

[NET HUNTERS]

224 Arab traders ivory became a most precious
[237] commodity, and the Pygmies were doubly in-
• [439] couraged to kill elephants. For the Pygmies
themselves, a slain elephant was a source of
great satisfaction, providing them with meat
ample enough to obviate the necessity of hunt-
ing for several days.

[157] The killing of the animal was, and still is, a
matter that inspired the normally audacious
Mbuti with some caution. Putnam says that
elephant hunting is a specialist occupation; not
every Pygmy is brave enough, and the tech-
nique itself takes great skill. The villagers use
[171] spear-falls and elephant pits (dug so as to trap

[P. 206 - B]

1: Turnbull E-4,5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

[P209-A]

222
295



FIG. 42. Gathering equipment, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri. a-b. Baskets,
[49] etc. Close-mesh baskets are obtained from neighboring villages and may be offered by vil-
lagers in exchange for forest products.

[NET HUNTERS]

- 222 Putnam says that, for most of the year, gathering
221 ing can be said only to supplement vegetable
• 439 food obtained from the villager plantations, although during the "dry season" (January-February) certain seeds and fruits ripen, and forest foods become so plentiful that the Pygmy can live entirely by gathering.

222 Particularly important among the fruits is
[137] the *ibumbi*, a large fruit somewhat resembling
an outsized pineapple. When ripe it can be
heard falling to the ground, at which there is a

[P 209-8]

[NET HUNTERS]

- 262 Lesser taboos are observed by children until they reach the age of puberty. These, according to the Pygmies themselves, result from the fact that a certain kind of food makes a certain child sick and thenceforth is taboo to it.
- 262 There are also certain food restrictions during periods of puberty, pregnancy, and mourning, and others emphasizing the opposition of the sexes. Putnam gives as an example the refusal of men to eat frogs and toads, which women gladly eat, and suggests as a reason the association of the amphibians with water and land, and that they might bring about rainfall adverse to hunting.

TRADE

- 439 As with the archers, great stress is laid by Putnam on the present dependency of the net hunters on the villager plantations for vegetable food, particularly the plantain. In principle the system is the same as that outlined by Schebesta. Putnam says that the relationship is inter-familial and inherited according to the principle of patrilineal descent. There is no strict account kept of trade, or any system of equivalent values other than mutual satisfaction. But the villager, if displeased, may withhold bananas, and the Pygmy, if not satisfied, may leave and go to hunt with another band attached to another patron. (Putnam uses the term "host.") When

[177] ² Very possibly of village origin.
[P. 211-B]

[NET HUNTERS]

[P. 211-C]

alliances change in this way it is a source of friction between the two village groups involved and was at one time a frequent source of inter-village warfare. 439 177

Prior to this trade relationship, however, Putnam stresses the importance of the place of the Pygmies as mercenaries, acting as spies and scouts for warring village tribes. From his inquiries during his first period of field work in 1928 he surmised that throughout the Ituri this had at one time been the major basis of the Mbuti-villager relationship. It necessitated the supply of food by the villager to the Pygmy, as the latter had no time to hunt and gather his own food. When the Belgians put an end to tribal warfare, there was no further need for the Mbuti as mercenaries, resulting in the present trade relationship. The difference between net-hunting Pygmies and those of Schebesta's account, in their relationship with the villagers, is that among the archers the relationship is band to village, a result of the Belgian bolstering of chieftainship, even where it did not exist, for administrative convenience. The village "chief" then chooses to work through a Pygmy "chief" 648 439 177 [174] [178] 648 177 571

[NET HUNTERS]

of his own creation. But among the Epulu net hunters, and other central and western groups, in which village tribal structure has not been so greatly affected, the relationship is still, in Putnam's opinion, intensely personal between individual and individual, or family and family. The superficial dissatisfaction manifest between Pygmy and villager over their trade relationship is a result of and symbolizes the present stratification with the villager at the upper end of the scale and hides the inner feelings of loyalty and affection that Putnam says exists between the two groups.

SOCIAL LIFE

FAMILY ORGANIZATION

For the most part the family organization among the net hunters is the same as that described by Schebesta for the archers, and, as with them, some of the women come from different bands and are strangers to one another. The net hunting camps are larger, however, than those of the archers, and it is seldom that a bride finds herself a total stranger in her new home. Further, because of the differences in hunting technique, cooperative feeling among the women of a net-hunting band is much stronger than that

[p. 211-D]

648
184
177
571

[439] •

621
562
[582]
[84]

621
476
184
562

Mbuti

Zaire FO1

[NET HUNTERS]

186
53
The villagers, says Putnam (1948, 324), regard the Mbuti as a class of beings somewhere between humans and animals. They take Pygmy wives, however, because they are prolific and good to sleep with, and the children of such unions are considered as full human beings and are brought up as such. Further, the villagers think of the Mbuti as barbaric and uncultured, but this attitude does not affect their mutual affection.

There is some evidence that respect for the Mbuti, in some form, is not lacking among the villagers. Geluwe (1956) mentions the Bira custom of offering first fruits from the plantations to the Pygmies. Anne Putnam says that the villagers agree with the Pygmies and that the latter have the right to take what food they want from the plantations following the killing of an elephant. Possoz (1954, 2575) suggests that there are linguistic grounds for assuming that the villagers originally referred to the Mbuti by a term denoting respect for them because of their closer connection with the forest spirits.

172
439
881
571
P
535
177
571
Putnam mentions trade and the *nkumoi* as two of the major factors, apart from personal relations at an inter-familial level, in maintaining the Mbuti-villager relationship.

Another important factor in interaction is the dance. When the Mbuti stay near the vil-

[P 229-B]

182 With regard to material culture and tech-
184 nology, there is far more uniformity than diver-
gence. The technology of the net hunters dem-
onstrates a greater adaptation to the forest
environment, and their material culture is con-
sistent with the fact that they are more truly
[482] nomadic than the archers. Heavy objects such
as the mortars and drums mentioned by Sche-
besta could not be maintained by a nomadic
band unless it was always within easy reach of
the village.

ECONOMIC LIFE

224 In a comparison of the two major types of
184 hunt, according to which we classify the Mbuti
into archers and net hunters, three factors in
particular are worth noting:

1. The net hunt, of all the hunting methods
described (including the ~~hghr~~ beat of the arch-
ers), produces both the surest and the largest
supply of meat. The inadequacy of archery
[411] among the Mbuti, owing partly to inaccuracy
[197] with their small bows and partly to the gen-
[439] erally poor visibility, may account in part for
the greater economic dependence of the archer
bands on their villager neighbors.

2. The net hunt is essentially a cooperative
224 activity, requiring the participation of the band
426 as a whole, including women and children. It
62 reinforces the strength of the band as such; it
562 does not differentiate between the relationships
184 of the men and the women toward the forest;
and it establishes for each sex a basic and

[A 244-B]

CP 245-A7
222 both groups it appears that food acquired by
184 gathering is more prominent in the Mbuti diet
462 than the product of hunting.

222 Honey gathering, a primarily male activity,
221 is the only major seasonal activity. There are
184 indications from both groups that the Mbuti
[462] regard this as a festive season and that it was
possibly once of greater social significance than
it is now, when recreation and variety are more
easily had through contact with the villagers.
Nonetheless it is still more important to both
groups than can be accounted for by its eco-
nomic aspect alone.

27 There is not enough information on drinks,
262 narcotics, and stimulants, nor on food restric-
128 tions, to allow for these to be placed in a sys-
tematic framework.

• 439 With regard to trade, we have no details for
either the net hunters or the archers on this
extremely important point of contact between
the Mbuti and the villagers. Trade with vil-
lagers exists in both Mbuti groups, and both
Schebesta and Putnam attach great importance
to it. Neither, however, explains it satisfac-
torily.

- 439
114
[181] torily. Schebesta (1952, 42-43) involves himself in a blatant self-contradiction by saying at one point that the Pygmy culture is static and conservative because the forest provides him with an abundance from which he can satisfy all his needs. Elsewhere (1933, 28; 1952, 100-101) he writes that the Pygmy could not survive without the villager plantations. Both Patrick and Anne Putnam would reinforce the latter statement from their experience of the Epulu Mbuti, but only in so far as luxuries, such as plantains, have become necessities. Putnam asserts that 439 the Pygmy could, when he wanted, support 433 himself from the forest alone, and sometimes does. There can be little doubt about this latter point, as a hunting group may be 10 days away [182] from the village. Transportation of adequate supplies of bananas over so great a distance would be impossible, particularly among a net-hunting community in which the women are required for hunting as well as gathering. The [462] archer woman, for whom gathering is a full-time [222] occupation, might just as well gather in the villager plantation as in the forest, particularly as, [184] according to Schebesta (1952, 148), archer bands are always situated close to villages. 439 More information is badly needed for an accurate assessment of exactly how fundamental this trade relationship is and how far it is a [P 245-B]

[P.245-C]

mere outward expression of an inevitable relationship brought about by territorial propinquity. It would certainly seem, from both accounts, that there is no question of necessity on either side. The Mbuti *can* gather all they need, and the villagers *can* hunt, without having to go far into the forest, by using traps, pits, spear falls, and other means.

439 •

SOCIAL LIFE

We indicate above some of the differences in social life that may be attributed to differences in hunting technique, notably because of the cooperative nature of the net hunt. In the material considered in the section on Social Life (pp. 211-223), these differences may be observed more directly. There is not only greater parity between the sexes among the net hunters, but also the father enters more fully into family life than among the archers. We would connect this difference with the lesser importance of the lineage among the net hunters. Schebesta (1948, 306-307) describes a "local group" (i.e., an economic hunting unit) as being primarily a lineage, under the authority of the

184
182

[562]
[593]

184
613
621

554 The fact that men go through the not inconsiderable beating inflicted on them by the women
881 in order to gain admission, without ever taking advantage of the young maidens then available to them, is another indication of the function of the *elima* in determining male status.

555 Male status depends primarily on skill in the hunt; this may be deliberately acquired by individual exploits such as elephant hunting.

224 Among certain bands elephant hunting is a specialized profession, the ivory being used for trade. Among the Epulu net hunters it is not so.

• [439] It is an exceptional occurrence and, as described by Anne Putnam (1954, 143 ff.), may be undertaken without any thought for the food or ivory, at times when the band has no need of extra meat or of trade with the villagers. On this occasion the Pygmy hunter admits that he was frightened. He describes how he killed the elephant simply because he felt compelled to do so. This compulsion may have arisen in part by [325] virtue of his reputation as a great hunter, and in part from constant opposition between the human world and the animal world, and the constant effort of the Mbuti to assert the superiority of the former.

224 This latter aspect was also witnessed in the ceremony described by Anne Putnam (1954, 825 [P. 247-B])

Little can be said of inter-band relationships as there are so few data. Neither type of band has any need to cooperate with neighboring bands for the hunt but may do so on rare occasions when there is a particular profusion of game. Among the archers joint hunting would be necessary in order to make use of the *kyga* beating technique. Among net hunters two or more bands might combine either when the individual bands fall below economic level or when a particular profusion of game requires more nets than are possessed by the single band. With the net hunters such association could become permanent, whereas with the archers it would never be necessary as the band is of such small optimum size.

The difference between the archers and the net hunters in their relationship with the villager tribes, as described by Schebesta and Putnam, is one of both degree and kind. We have seen that with their less efficient hunting technique the archers must rely more on vegetable products, and how, with the women's sphere limited to gathering, the women have more time and opportunity for gathering from the villager plantations. The less exhaustive and less noisy

[P 247-D]

[P248 - A]

184 nature of the hunt also makes possible a more
182 permanent settlement near the village. The
224 traderelationship among the archers, then, as-
434 sumes greater importance and is more formal-
ized. Schebesta further understands it as being
an inter-lineage relationship. Putnam, while
acknowledging its importance also for the net
hunters, says that it is interfamilial and can be
broken by either side. The net-hunting tech-
nique makes more game available for trade, so
there is less demand by villagers upon the net
hunters than by the Lese of the archers. The
necessity of a more strictly nomadic life also
militates against permanent and continuous at-
tachment between the net-hunting Mbuti and
any one villager "master."

128 Of the legal system no more can be added to
the section dealing with authority and leader-
ship. There are simply not enough data even for
comparison of the concepts of property and
ownership between the two groups.

THE MBUTI-VILLAGER RELATIONSHIP

121
177
-439
[28] In the preceding sections we dealt with the survey briefly, mainly in order to test the validity of our classification of the Mbuti into net hunters and archers. We deliberately avoided, as far as possible, reference to the Mbuti-villager relationship, although in the final section on religious life it became particularly obvious that this relationship could not be ignored. In Mbuti society a number of institutions in one way or another are associated with or appear to be identical with villager institutions, and we must understand this connection. The only alternative is to assume that the relationship between the two peoples is one of straightforward symbiosis based on an exchange of meat for plantation products and that, in the course of this symbiosis, certain customs have been adopted and are practiced either separately or jointly. This often-drawn picture represents only the outward appearance of the facts. When one tries to understand it as part of a coherent system, however, it can be done only by creating a hypothetical Mbuti social system that is in fact a hodgepodge culled from all over the Ituri area, from which any offending portions are plucked with the excuse that they are of villager origin.

121
177 We must determine, then, the underlying facts, as opposed to the mere outward appearance: the extent to which various institutions have been adopted by the Mbuti; how far their underlying values have also been adopted, or
[A249-B]

[CP 249- C7]

how far only the outward form of the custom has been taken over and the values rejected. The most we can do is to clear the ground for such a study. We do so with reference only to the Epulu net hunters (unless otherwise stated), as our information is fullest here.

121
177

In the first place, what are the major points of contact between these two people? They may be listed as follows:

Material culture

Trade

Magical practice

Dance and festivity

Intermarriage

Ceremonial attendant on birth, puberty, marriage, and death

MATERIAL CULTURE

The adoption by the Mbuti of various villager items of material culture or technological skill has only one significance for us, which is the extent to which it places the Mbuti in a dependent position. This is difficult to estimate. It is difficult to visualize the Mbuti without metal and hard, though quite possible, to visualize them without plantains. But, even among the net hunters, luxuries tend to become necessities, and we must admit of the trend, if not the accomplished fact, toward economic dependency on the villagers.

177
439 •

[178]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

TRADE

The bare facts only are known. The Mbuti supply the villagers with meat and with certain forest products, such as roofing leaves or lianas, in return for plantation products. The villager invariably tries to enforce some service as well, with varying degrees of success. Either extreme can be found: cases in which the relationship is formal and binding in fact as well as theory, and those in which the theory is held only by the villagers and does not correspond to the fact, i.e., the Pygmy maintains his side of the trade relationship only so long as it suits him. In my experience the latter is the situation far more often than otherwise.

Then again we must emphasize that trade is not necessary on either side. The villagers could perfectly well hunt if they had to, and the Pygmies could equally well gather all their vegetable needs from the forest. Further, contrary to Schebesta's (1952, 112) assertion, the Mbuti are perfectly capable of cultivating, given a

[P 249-D]

Z
439
433
177
P
439
433
177

P
(241)

2
439
439
177
P
439
439
177
Z
439
439
177
P
439
439
177
[0.250-A]

clear space. Some of the net hunters in the Epulu area have tried, and with success, but quickly lose interest and revert to their old nomadic ways.

The fact that there is no attempt to equate the supply of meat and the supply of plantains is also significant. Either side gives what it feels like giving, except that the Mbuti believe themselves free to take what they want if it is not given. There is also the Bira custom mentioned by Joset (1947, 13) of giving the first fruits to the Pygmies. The Mbuti seem to have control of this situation. The villagers have no means of preventing the Mbuti from returning to the depths of the forest whenever they wish. When the Pygmy hunting camp is some distance from the village, the villagers may send in to ask for meat, or the chief may even come himself.

Sometimes the villagers try to gain control of the situation by supplying nets and claiming the appropriate share of a net owner. The Mbuti accept the nets, but see to it that only such game falls into them as they think fit. They eventually contest the ownership of the net, claiming to have added to it themselves and thrown away the damaged, village portion.

At most, it seems possible to regard the trade relationship only as one of mutual convenience. By itself, it is far too unformalized and unstable to provide the basis for the remarkably close relationship that does, in fact, exist between the two groups.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1955 FO4 Pygmies FO4

Mbuti

Zaire FO1

[P.250-C]

besta (1950, 80) mentions ceremonies performed by the archers themselves to "open" the forest. There is no evidence of such a practice among the net hunters, but they may call in a villager for the purpose. But here we should consider Pygmy acumen. If he has not been supplying the villagers with meat for some time, yet has been drawing supplies of bananas, he gives as his excuse the fact that the hunting has been poor. Such an excuse is safe enough, as the villagers never accompany the Pygmies on a hunt. Even if the villagers wait for them in the hunting camp, the Pygmies see to it that they never know how much game was actually caught. But the Pygmy may seek to reinforce his position by inviting the villager to improve the hunting. In doing this, he is a step ahead of the villager, who will himself insist on performing the ceremony if hunting is persistently bad. As far as one can judge from casual conversation among themselves after such a ceremony, the Mbuti have little faith in it. Further, they have their own method of dealing with any critical situation. If the hunting is really bad they convoke the *molimo*. In effect, they "sing" the hunting well: there is no supplication and no prayer. The song may or may not be accompanied by a dance re-enacting a successful hunt, but, even if so, the stress is laid on the song and the participation of all the hunters.

P
224
177

789

2

789

533

177

P

[439] .

P

224

789

533

Mbuti

Zaire FO1

[P. 251-C]

general acceptance of villager superiority among the Mbuti, although some individuals may rarely seek to increase their status by emulating their villager neighbors. From general observation I would say that the hunting band tolerates an occasional marriage to a villager because of its economic and political advantages, to which they are very alive and of which they take full advantage when it suits them. They receive little payment for the girl they give (a fraction of what the villager would give another villager), but they consider that they then have a villager they can well and truly "eat."

CEREMONIAL ATTENDANT ON BIRTH,
INITIATION, MARRIAGE, AND DEATH

All the areas of contact between the Mbuti and their villager neighbors so far mentioned have been in or near the village. This point is of no small importance. The Pygmies always make the move, make contact or break it, and they take care that, apart from occasional visits from villager individuals to their hunting camp, all contact takes place in the village. Also, the areas of contact so far described could all be explained away at a more or less superficial level. The degree to which trade and adoption of villager magical practices and beliefs actually affect the forest life of the Mbuti is bound to vary from band to band. But among the Epulu net hunters, at least, the points of contact described above have not affected their nomadic way of life unduly.

Mbuti

Zaire FO1

"Initiation" in its broadest sense implies admission to some form of exclusive association or adoption of a certain system of values. The 1954 *nkumbi* cannot be regarded as initiation for the Mbuti under this definition. Although the circumstances were unusual, in that no villager boys were available to share the *nkumbi* with the Pygmy boys, it is precisely this factor that throws a new light on the more usual joint participation of both groups. If it is not "initiation" for the Mbuti, what is it? 281

We seem to be in the presence of an attempt to maintain or establish some kind of common ground between two neighboring peoples who can find no common values, yet who inevitably come into contact with each other. We have seen that the original point of contact was the use of the Mbuti, by warring villagers, as mercenary soldiers, spies, and scouts. While acting in this capacity the Mbuti were necessarily dependent on the villagers for food supplies. The Mbuti were also used by the villagers to hunt elephant and to bring in tusks for the ivory trade. But, with the cessation of tribal warfare and the government control of ivory, these relationships came to an end. The villager no longer had any use for the Pygmy, who in [P 254-D] P
Z
127
181
P
Z
17
439 •

[P.255-A]

P
Z
17
• 439
turn was free to return to his nomadic existence. We can suppose that the present relationship between the villagers and the Mbuti originated in this way and not in economic dependence or physical subjugation. Whereas it was once a clear patron-client relationship, it now seems to have no such clear basis, either economic or political.

P
439
184
P
Z
177
648
P
B21
There is, among both the archer and the net-hunter Mbuti, a trade relationship with the villagers, but this now appears to be economically artificial rather than necessary. Particularly among the net hunters, who are more nomadic than the archers, this trade relationship is little more than one of mutual convenience. By itself, trade does not provide a sufficiently stable basis for Pygmy-villager interaction. The spasmodic nature of contact between the two peoples complicates the issue further. Also, because of their nomadic existence and the loose structure of band composition, any Pygmy net hunter establishes relationships with villagers in different villages, quite possibly of different tribes. It seems that greater stability is precisely one objective that Mbuti participation in the *wakumisi* achieves, for this festival is common to the majority of the tribes in the area.

[P. 255-C]

shows the extent to which these particular Mbuti preserve their "in-group" feeling.

A Pygmy net-hunting band is powerfully integrated yet fluid, and its contact with alien societies is necessarily unformalized. Less well-knit bands, such as may be found among the archers described by Schebesta, may find it possible to enter into some kind of symbiotic relationship with the villagers, but not so an active, nomadic, net-hunting band. Some kind of relationship must be established because of the inevitability of contact. As the smaller, more powerfully integrated group, the Pygmies must make the move to fit into the larger, looser group. But there is no question of absorption; the smaller group preserves its identity. The *nkumbi*, and participation in or adoption of other villager ceremonies, provide the Mbuti with an opportunity both for establishing a place in villager society and for asserting their independent set of values by opposition. The antagonism that remains and is even heightened by this opposition is smoothed over to some extent by the secondary mechanism by which the two groups attempt to express their rela-

tionship-mutual trade

000

P
621
248
171
084
Z
[563]

P
2
[439].

¹⁰⁷⁶
The function of these associations is to regulate the relationship of these Mbuti with their forest world, to maintain the normality of that relationship and to restore it when disturbed, by rousing the God of the Forest from his sleep by song, echoed into the forest by means of the *molimo* horn in the case of formal meetings of the men's association. This god is the source of good and bad, and it is therefore sufficient to waken him. There is no formal supplication phrased in words as such. [575
182
796
778
726
533]

The *molimo* and *elima* are distinct from village association with similar names and from whatever association it is into which the *nkumbi* initiates the villagers. Mbuti participation in the *nkumbi*, as in other village ceremonies, is part of the mutual attempt of two peoples forced together by historical reasons and present territorial juxtaposition to regularize their relationship, each to his own satisfaction. Trade is another such expression of their relationship; it is not the basis of it. Further, participation in the *nkumbi* involves an opposition between two sets of values (those of the villagers and those of the Mbuti taking part), as *nkumbi* initiation does not qualify the Mbuti for entry into his own religious association nor accord him any status in his own society. It enables him to move as an adult in villager society and gives the two peoples some common ground involving a superficially subordinate position for the Mbuti. [782]
[575
177]
[439] •
[581]
[554]
[771]
[81]

1. [Molimo and Elima associations
--Analyst]

[2258-C]

In treating the Mbuti art forms, we must determine both their function and their meaning, to see how far they form part of the social structure, possibly as regulative mechanisms, and the values they express, maintain, or enforce. In so doing we can reach the heart of the Mbuti magico-religious system which promises, from the material presented here, to be of particular interest and to provide useful material for comparison with the magico-religious systems of other forest peoples, hunters and gatherers. 182
53

The Mbuti-villager relationship is probably the major problem that arises from the survey. We try to show, particularly by citing the 1954 *nkumbi* initiation, that this relationship is not a straightforward symbiosis based on necessary trade amounting to a division of labor between the two people. Such a division of labor exists, but it is an outward symbol of the relationship rather than its inner core. In studying this problem we are studying social change which is likely to assume a different form for each hunting band we consider. There are practical grounds for the difference between the relationship of the archers to their villager neighbors and that of the more nomadic net hunters to 177
439
184

[P. 273- D]

CP.274-A1

177 theirs. There is also evidence, but in regrettably
• 439 little detail, that certain hunting bands main-
184 tain a client-patron relationship by specializing
in elephant hunting, bringing the tusks to the
villagers, on whom they rely for all vegetable
products and on the edge of whose villages they
live in permanent camps.

177 However, no matter how great or little the
degree of dependence on the villagers, the
Mbuti for whom we have any information all
seem to maintain a distinct individuality in op-
position to the villagers, despite their apparent
adoption of villager institutions and even of
(81) villager language. With regard to the adoption
of villager customs, the 1954 *nkumbi* shows the
degree to which this adoption may be a mere
superficial conformity and may indeed conceal
a formal rejection of villager values. A very
careful study should be made of all such insti-
tutions held in common, if not practiced jointly.

177 It is indeed at this level that we seem to find
184 some excuse for referring to the Ituri Mbuti as
a single people rather than as consisting of a
number of widely scattered, semi-independent

2: Turnbull

FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

177

648

• 439

563

[For additional information on Villager/Mbuti relationships in which interpersonal and/or kpara/kare (artificial kin) aspects predominate, see also 608, 571, 578.]

2: Turnbull

FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

648

177

• 439

[Author's general discussions of his approach to the problem of Village/Mbuti relationship, in which there is little presentation of specific economic, social or cultural data on the relationship, will be found in category 121.]

[12]
[114] the most general nature of the forest context and in absolute ignorance of the structure of the forest world. But this in turn leads to another reason for considering the village world first, for the universality of the misconception and its common cause are in themselves highly significant. The misconception, that is to say the notion of the Mbuti as a subordinate and dependent people is, although a myth in actuality, nonetheless a structural factor of the greatest importance, and it is the relationship of the Mbuti to the village world that leads to some of the most interesting elements in the over-all social framework of Mbuti society as it is today. It is not our intent to say what elements of Mbuti society are caused by their relationship with the villagers, but it is certain that many elements, such as the constant process of fragmentation, fission and fusion, take on special significance in light of that relationship. Even the most central religious institutions, sacred to the forest, appear to be in the process of adaptation, allowing for and encouraging a widening of the Mbuti social horizon, bringing about a wider sense of unity (both religious and political) than apparently existed before.

- 439
282 Ostensibly the relationship is based upon the economic dependence of the Mbuti on the villagers for food and metal. Both manioc and bananas (sweet as well as plantain) are grown throughout the Ituri region and jointly form the staple. Both foods are eagerly sought and consumed by all Mbuti, who in the forest have nothing akin to the banana or to the large manioc root. The small, sweet forest *itaba* root [222] has to be grubbed for, and, as the Mbuti say, it is much easier to get manioc from the villagers. Other village foods consumed by the Mbuti are groundnuts, corn, rice and beans but, as for the villagers, they are supplementary. Any of these foods may be carried off to the forest camps and consumed there. Indeed in any village on almost any day [482]
[462] one is likely to see a pygmy woman or two filling her carrying basket to capacity with such foods and returning to the forest camp. If the hunting camp is nearby, a regular supply line is maintained, and even forest food becomes supplementary in Mbuti diet.

439 When in the village the Mbuti also have access to luxuries such as palm wine, and to certain trade goods; tobacco and second-hand clothes are the most important such items.

[325] Having no knowledge of metalworking,¹ the Mbuti are without a

[482]
4 [171] ¹ A few Mbuti prisoners were taught by the Belgian administrator at Mambasa how to hammer arrow tips as part of his campaign to "liberate" the Mbuti from their dependence upon the villagers.

THE MBUTI/VILLAGER RELATIONSHIP

35

doubt wholly dependent upon the villagers for all metal goods. So also with pottery, there being absolutely no knowledge of pottery manufacture among the Mbuti.

439
[325]
[323]

But it is significant that none of the authorities who cite the lack of these foodstuffs and metallurgical and ceramic skills among the Mbuti as an example of their economic dependence also cite the absence, among the Mbuti, of all knowledge of fire-making.² By the same reasoning this should make them dependent on the villagers for matches. The point is that mere lack does not constitute a necessary structural dependence, unless the lack is vital. We have to ask ourselves how necessary is this apparent economic dependence of the Mbuti upon the villagers.

439
177
114
121
372

It will be shown in the section on "The Forest World" that there is no question of any absolute dependence of the Mbuti upon the villagers for food, in that context, except insofar as luxuries ultimately tend to become necessities. It will be seen that in the forest their technology is sufficient to keep them supplied with all their basic needs. It will also be seen that metal is not a necessary part of their technology, any more than is pottery, or knowledge of fire-making.

325
[323]
[372]

In the village world, however, the Mbuti are completely dependent upon the villagers. Hunting and gathering in the neighborhood of any village are likely to be equally poor, and it would be difficult if not impossible for an Mbuti band to keep itself supplied with forest foodstuffs from a village headquarters. It would involve a half day's march, at least, to reach a suitable hunting area, and the physical effort alone would be enough to discourage even the most ardent hunter. But even more important is the fact that by living in the village the Mbuti would be out of touch with the forest, and would have no way of knowing the exact whereabouts of the game at any given time. Living in a hunting camp with the forest all around them, the Mbuti know only what is going on in their immediate vicinity. As the game moves

224
433
[222]

² Some Mbuti have learned to use matches, when available, and a few know of the fire drill from contact with their village neighbors. There is absolutely no indigenous method of making fire, however, and it is a point of no small importance to their social life that each household maintains its own hearth. Embers from this hearth are carried, usually by the woman, wrapped in fire-resistant leaves, during the hunt or while on the trail. At each new camp site, the family hearth is kindled from embers of the old family hearth, preserving a distinct sense of continuity. Whenever a communal hearth is required, as for the *modimo*, communal participation is accentuated by the compulsory contribution of embers from each family hearth. When matches are rarely used, becoming quickly damp and useless, even if available, they are never used for kindling family or communal hearths, but only for such relatively mundane purposes as lighting a pipe or cigarette.

224 out of that vicinity, however, they keep track of it, and they send out
433 scouts to help them decide the best location for their next hunting
camp.

439 Insofar as the Mbuti are dependent upon the villagers for village
262 foods, thus far are they dependent also for certain items of material
252 culture, in metal, pottery and wood. Even so, of the village foods
415 only rice and beans (neither of which can be considered as staples even
177 among the villagers) demand pottery or metal cooking vessels. Trade
vessels of aluminum are rapidly replacing all pottery vessels. Manioc,
plantains, corn and peanuts can be roasted, the sweet banana and
peanut can be eaten raw, and manioc can also be eaten without cook-
ing if it is first soaked in cold water for several days.

439 However, in every Mbuti village camp each household will boast at
415 least one metal vessel, and there will be one or two wooden mortars
177 and pestles for common usage. In addition, there is only the metal
439 knife blade which might be said to be necessary to the Mbuti in their
412 village life, for peeling, scraping and cutting the manioc root, and the
177 metal ax blade needed for cutting the saplings used in the construc-
tion of either village-type houses or forest-style huts. The technologi-
cal dependence of the Mbuti upon the villagers, in the village, is then
not great, and is directly contingent upon Mbuti dependence upon
village foods in the same context.

325 We shall see that in the forest context, as with food, there is no es-
sential dependence either on materials such as metal, or on skill in
224 working them. It has been argued that the Mbuti hunt is dependent
411 upon metal arrow-points, spear blades, and knife blades. It is not. We
shall see that the Mbuti frequently prefer to use the poisoned arrows
that have only a fire-hardened tip, for sound practical reasons; that
they use the spear primarily for defense rather than offense, and in
any case still retain knowledge of the fire-hardened point and the be-
lief that it is as effective as metal except, possibly, against buffalo and
elephant. Old Mbuti assert that fire-hardened spears are effective even
412 against the largest game. Slit bamboo and slit reeds offer adequate
cutting surfaces, though they dull quickly and are seldom used to-
day; they could, however, successfully replace the metal knife as far
as the forest life of the Mbuti is concerned. There are certain types of
322 vine that have a highly abrasive surface and can be used for scraping
324 itaba roots. Of all the village utensils, the two that the Mbuti would
miss the most would be the machete and the ax blade. The machete
is used for cutting the light *fito* saplings that form the framework for

THE MBUTI/VILLAGER RELATIONSHIP

37

the hots and the shafts for spears; the ax is used for enlarging the 412
holes in which bees make their hives, so that the honey can be ex-
tracted more easily. Younger Mbuti do not know what they would
do without the machete for cutting saplings. Both they and the older
men realize that the ax is not absolutely essential, and I have seen ax-
shaped clubs used for breaking away the wood from around a hive,
where the wood is rotten, as it frequently is. The older men say that 324
if they did not have machetes for cutting saplings they would use
stone tools, but they have no knowledge at all of how to make such
tools, and are probably prompted to make this remark by the presence
in the forest of early stone axes.

Accepting, for the moment, that the Mbuti in their forest world are 121
not in any position of necessary dependence upon the villagers for food 177,
or material, or technological skill, and admitting that in the village con-
text they are dependent, the question arises as to why they choose to
place themselves in that position of dependence. It is certainly not out
of economic necessity. The truth of the matter is simply that the vil-
lage offers, for a brief while, an agreeable change of pace, an opportu-
nity for a relaxation that is not always possible in the forest, and, one
might say, better hunting, on occasion. An Mbuti band or an Mbuti
family or an Mbuti individual may descend upon a village either be-
cause of sheer whim, or because of laziness if the forest hunting gets
too strenuous, or because of disension, or indeed for almost any rea-
son except necessity. Whatever the reason, and most commonly it at
least involves an expressed desire for relaxation and freedom from
care, the reason is on the side of the Mbuti, the choice is theirs, and
the dependence that follows is as voluntary as it is temporary.

ECONOMIC RECIPROCITY

We then have to ask what the Mbuti offer in return for the food
and metal products that they receive, and to determine at least the
economic structure of the relationship. In so doing we are inevitably
led to consider the domestic, political and religious aspects and their
interrelationship with the economic system, and it is in these inter-
relationships that inconsistency and conflict emerge.

Even in terms of sheer economic reciprocity the relationship is in- 121
herently unstable. Continuing to grant, for the moment, the fact that 177*
no economic necessity is involved on the part of the Mbuti, and that 439 •
their dependence is voluntary and temporary, the forest world remain-

WAYWARD SERVANTS

P 38
121

* 177 ing an ever-present, ever-accessible sanctuary of independence, then
• 439 we are left with a situation which, if anything, is rather the reverse
of what it is normally stated to be; for we find that the villagers have
far more need of the Mbuti than the Mbuti have of the villagers.

P 38
177 Here we have to look briefly at the historical genesis of the relation-
ship, which began with the invasion of the first non-Mbuti tribes
• 439 those or four hundred years ago, and continued until the invasion
reached its climax in the nineteenth century. The Mbuti found them-
selves caught between a number of warring tribes, and according to
legend (also according to what one might reasonably expect) each
isolated hunting band found it convenient to attach itself to one or
another group of villagers. The villagers, on their part, needed the
Mbuti as guides, scouts and spies, and, as related today by both sides,
employed them as such, feeding them in return. When the situation
became more stable, and notably when the last vestiges of open hos-
tility were suppressed by the Belgian administration, this original
relationship came to an end, neither side having any absolute need
of the other. The Mbuti, however, had developed a strong taste for
plantation foods and maintained their demands on the villagers. To
this day, if a villager does not accede to such demands his plantation is
simply raided and he has no recourse. Recognizing the difficulty of
making an effective claim for theft, the villagers continued to supply
food at request, but attempted to secure certain services in return.

P 38
439 We have already mentioned the attitude of the villagers toward
the forest as a hostile place, and a place that they people with evil
spirits. One of the services that they have tried to elicit from the
Mbuti, then, is the supply of forest necessities such as saplings and
leaves for homebuilding, bark for clothmaking (now almost obsolete
among all the villagers), and meat and honey. The longer a village is
in existence, the more scarce these supplies become in the immediate
vicinity, and the villagers are mostly loath to venture far into the for-
est. However, plainly, as with the Mbuti, it is a question of conve-
nience rather than necessity, though the Mbuti say that the villagers
could never be successful as hunters, being far too clumsy and slow.

[126] This is all largely a matter of historical conjecture, but it helps in
providing a sense of direction, and in indicating that the onus for
maintaining a reasonable degree of reciprocity is all the time upon
the villagers, not upon the Mbuti. For today the villagers are still un-
willing to go into the forest, and the Mbuti are still their major source
of meat, honey and building materials. But there is, today, an addi-

THE MBUTI/VILLAGER RELATIONSHIP

39

tional factor that increases the degree of necessity and dependence on the part of the villagers. By "today" I refer to the period of Belgian administration, for which we have historic record. During this period additional demands were made by the administration upon the villagers; notably, able-bodied men were recruited into the road gangs for building and maintaining the thousand-odd miles of road that cross the forest, linking the widely separated administrative posts; and it was also demanded of the villagers that they produce certain specific crops in excess, and cultivate other new crops, particularly cotton, in addition. The food surplus was used to feed immigrant laborers, the cotton to produce some revenue in an otherwise highly unprofitable region.

These demands thus increased the amount of plantation work that had to be undertaken by each village, and at the same time reduced the labor force available. Penalties for failure were severe, and the villagers naturally turned to the Mbuti for help. Equally naturally, the Mbuti declined to help, except when the nature of the work suited their convenience and the rewards were adequate, and a long struggle began that continued right up to the time that independence somewhat altered the situation.

From the villagers' point of view, their relationship with the Mbuti, which had begun to prove rather tiresome and unprofitable, quickly became a matter of acute anxiety. Instead of regarding the Mbuti merely as parasites, which is effectively what they were, the villagers began to regard them as indispensable to the new village economy. From the Mbuti point of view, however, the situation had not changed. The forest was still there as a sanctuary to which they could retire with impunity at, literally, a moment's notice, and the village was still a place where they could relax, enjoy luxury foods, wine and tobacco, in return for a minimum amount of service. Being a practical people, however, they responded, to a token extent, to the new demands for service, in the form of plantation labor. But it was not to their taste, and it proved highly detrimental to their health. The villagers in many cases realized this and compromised by using the Mbuti mainly to maintain guard over the plantations, so they would not be affected by the unaccustomed sunlight or exercise, and only in emergencies asked them to actually work in the fields.

Such emergencies, however, became more and more frequent as administrative demands upon the villagers were increased. The cotton crop became the major issue, and the time of the cotton harvest was

P
C
195
648
241
433
464
P
195
648
P
195
648
464
C
(464)
P
195
648
241
464

THE MBUTI/VILLAGER RELATIONSHIP

41 C
622
648
248
464
P
464
648

time of the cotton harvest. On the other hand, Chief Nakhai, another Lesé Chief to the north, always seemed to have Mbuti at his beck and call, though he maintained them in rather distant plantations, not close to his village, and as far as I know used them only to provide supplies of forest products, and to help guard the plantations.

The lesser chiefs and village headmen, with no police force at their disposal and with less wealth to use in bribes, were rather more successful because the relationship was more intimate and personal. It is not infrequent for a strong attachment to grow between the villagers and Mbuti, and in such cases the economic exchange is much more balanced. In all other cases there can be no doubt that the Mbuti, with less necessity on their side, have all the advantages while the villagers are the losers. It is significant that on the one hand the Mbuti delight in deliberately shortchanging their exchange partners, thus in their eyes proving their own superiority, while on the other hand the villagers are forced by lack of political control to accept such short change with relative passivity, and indeed find ways of rationalizing it. They do this either by referring to the Mbuti as *nyuma*, or animals, thus excluding them from the realm of normal moral human behavior, or else they openly admit the Mbuti are right to help themselves to plantation products.

C
648
438
186
648
438
186

This latter admission is one of respect for the anteriority of the Mbuti in the forest and is common throughout the Ituri, and beyond, though by no means always open. It is manifest in certain rituals, such as when villagers offer firstfruits from a new plantation to "their" Mbuti (effectively, any Mbuti that happen to be on hand at the time), or when Mbuti are offered places of honor during funerary ceremonies for important villagers. An exceptional example of this respect occurs among the Tembo/Reqa populations of the Kivu district (Map 4), one instance of which occurred in September of 1958 at Mayolo village, where a new chief, Butahiri, was inaugurated. I did not witness the occasion, but he told me that on the day that he was crowned with the traditional bead hat, he had to sleep with his sister ("same stomach"). The next night he had to sleep with an Mbuti girl presented to him by the Mbuti "Chief." Butahiri insisted that there was such a Chief, and said that traditionally the girl was meant to be his daughter, but this was not always possible and in that case it was "some other" unmarried female relative. He said he only had to sleep with her once, after which she was sent

C
[128]
[192]
C
229
648
563
[574]
P
648
C
229
648
563
[574]
P
648
C
229
648
563
[574]
P
648

C
829
848
823
823
834
P
648
648
834
back to the forest and was never again to be allowed to see him or any of his family, but would be well cared for.

On attempting to find this Mbuti Chief, I discovered that he was in fact just an elderly hunter, and that the girl was his granddaughter. The local Mbuti denied any system of chieftainship, but said that they always appointed one person to deal with the villagers, as in this instance. Both they and the villagers claimed that the legitimate heir to the chieftainship had to be born of either one of these two formal unions, and that in fact the Chief would sleep again with one or the other girl until she bore him at least two boys. They also said that obviously he would not sleep again with his sister (he himself seemed somewhat disgusted at the recollection of his first night as Chief), and so it would be his Mbuti wife who would provide the tribe with its heir.

C
648
574
648
There are also firstfruit offerings to the Mbuti in this area, and the same elements of respect and of economic unbalance extend right out of the forest into Ruanda and Burundi, even to the Twa in their relationship with the Tuni. For our present purposes, however, the two situations are not strictly comparable.

P
C
648
• [439]
But however the villagers might rationalize the economic advantages that accrue to the Mbuti, they do not accept the situation entirely passively. They attempt to create some mechanism by which they can exert authority over the Mbuti and compel them to their service. It is quite evident that if the powerful tribal chiefs backed by armed police are unable to pursue the Mbuti in the forest (even the Belgian administration did not attempt to extend their authority this far), the lesser chiefs are going to be that much more incapable of asserting direct political control. Chiefs such as Kachui, Hamadi, Lupao and Nakubai did not even enter disputes concerning Mbuti in their tribunal records, preferring to deal with such cases "directly." I have witnessed a number of such cases, most of them involving alleged theft, or failure to reciprocate in the exchange of food. The Mbuti claim is invariably that the land is his (even when the charge is for theft of property, not of food), and the villager claim is, equally invariably, that the Mbuti are servants of the villagers, bound to them by indissoluble bonds of heredity and by the fact that the villagers "rescued" the Mbuti from the forest. To this the Mbuti may reply that they "dug" the villagers from a hole in the ground and taught them "how to see and smell and hear and talk." If the case involves food, each side claims original ownership of the plantain

THE NOTION OF HEREDITARY OWNERSHIP

tween villagers arising out of the migratory tendencies of "their" Mbuti.

The effective system is that each band maintains an exchange relationship with the village or villages closest to its hunting territory, and effectively the relationship is an exchange not between band and village, except as territorial units only, but between nuclear families or mere individuals. If the exchange relationship follows descent lines, it is no more than incidental. From the Mbuti point of view, in any case, it makes not the slightest difference. All villagers are animals to be "eaten" without discrimination. It only makes a difference from the villager point of view, the question of compensation of the rightful "owner" continually arising.

Leaving the theoretical system for the moment, and looking at the effective system of exchange, we find that the tendency to think of the relationship as hereditary, on the part of the villagers, is irresponsible. As far as the Mbuti are concerned, they pick and choose. As a child an Mbuti may grow accustomed to a number of "owners," as his parents move from band to band, or village to village. When he is old enough to hunt he will choose whichever "owner" happens to be convenient at the time, but if he does not get the treatment he expects, he will without hesitation get himself "adopted" by another villager, even in the same village. The only consideration countenanced by the Mbuti is their own convenience.

A wise villager will treat his Mbuti well, and in return will be able to get the minimum service from them without too much difficulty, and there are instances where such relationship has apparently persisted over several generations (see Table 1). But the contemporary situation militates against persistence. For instance, among the Epulu net-hunters one of the larger "clan" units that made up the total composition of the band was the Fumi clan. In its entirety it was claimed by a prominent Bira named Ngoma. But Ngoma had to spend most of his time in Mambasa, the administrative post some fifty miles from his village, so in his absence his Mbuti were divided, according to the Bira system of inheritance, between his two brothers, Isa and Takalili. But the system did not specify where the dividing line should be drawn, and in any case the Fumi had moved a number of miles in the opposite direction and were on the other side of the Epulu River, in the territory of Chief Kachui of the Ndaka tribe. There they formed allegiances to local villagers, ignored the demands of Isa and Takalili to return to hunt for them, saying that they were

THE NOTION OF HEREDITARY OWNERSHIP

51

rate. I have known it to happen for Mbuti youngsters to go through the entire village marriage ceremony simply for the sake of the feasting, considering their relationship as no more than a mild flirtation. In either case the premature separation involves their respective *apara* in restitution proceedings, which even if successful will still leave a net loss to the extent, at least, of a feast that may have involved a hundred or more Mbuti and villagers for up to three days.

This, together with the fact that a union that is considered as incestuous by the one group is not necessarily considered incestuous by the other, is sufficient to indicate the incompatibility of the two systems, which is only heightened if we attempt to correlate either kinship system, that of the villagers or that of the Mbuti, with the economic exchange system.

By extending the parallel still further, however, the villagers make their final attempt to gain some effective measure of control over the Mbuti and resolve the inherent conflicts through supernatural sanctions. And once again they are thwarted by a number of factors, one being that the Mbuti continue to adopt the outer form of the village customs with the utmost readiness, but do not adopt the system. Whereas, for the villagers, the total social structure is an integrated whole consisting of a number of institutions interrelated in a definite manner, for the Mbuti, in the village context, the same institutions are adopted but by no means interrelated in the same manner. The relationship between kinship and leadership, as we have seen, does not apply to the Mbuti. Their *capite* is elected rather than descended, and his whole meaning and purpose are correspondingly different. The *capite* has absolutely nothing to do, among the Mbuti, with the maintenance of law and order, and in no way symbolizes the common origin of the male members of the band.

So also, for the Mbuti, is the economic exchange system unrelated to either the kinship or the political systems in the village context. The exchange relationships may run directly counter to all those prescribed by the various political and kinship institutions the Mbuti have equally adopted.

Their apparent readiness to participate in village institutions, if not in the system, however, leaves the Mbuti open to yet another line of attack. Unable to enforce any of the control that would normally derive from the adoption of their socio-politico-economic institutions, the villagers open their magico-religious institutions to the Mbuti, and thus seek to place them under supernatural control—the

789 C which only the villagers need a cure: There are a number of such
minor crises. Even if the action appears to be protective, it is still
basically curative. For instance, theft is common in villages, and vil-
lagers have a number of magical cures for theft that prevent it by cur-
789 ing the situation that might give rise to this antisocial act. This may
625 seem like an academic quibble, justifying the inclusion of protective
magic under the definition of magic as curative activity, but it is more
P basic than that. If the Mbuti saw themselves in a future context they
57 might be interested in protection, but one of their characteristics is to
789 think in terms of the present. Theft is not a part of their behavior
685 toward each other; there is nothing they have that the villagers can
steal from them, so there is no immediate situation to be cured. But
the danger of poor hunting is more real.

P For the hunt the Mbuti themselves have divers cures, but mostly
284 of a sympathetic nature and, considering the importance of the hunt,
789 remarkably few. The villagers, on the other hand, have a great number
439 of cures to offer, and if convenient the Mbuti accept them. But once
+177 again the question is one of need. From his experience the hunter
C sees no need to concern himself with the future: it is rare that the
439 hunting is so poor that he goes hungry. It is rare indeed even that
789 there could not be a surplus to trade with the villagers. But lack of
meat for trade is always excused by a plea of bad hunting. In fact, the
Mbuti even go further and point to the fact that they have no elabo-
rate cures for bad hunting, so how can the villagers blame them for
not bringing in meat? The villager then supplies the cures, and if
P these do not work he will even be told by the Mbuti that it must be
C witchcraft, and asked to call out a diviner. I know of three cases where
(154) Mbuti have been trained by villagers to divine witchcraft and are be-
lieved, by villagers, to be highly effective. But once again there is no
question of dependence.

C Other situations that need curing and that may be cured by em-
789 pirical (i.e., "magical") means available to villagers alone include
821 poor weather, attack by lightning, attack by a witch, or by the spirits
789 of the forest (*keti*). The cures consist of divers charms and fetich bun-
789 dles, but they are considered as effective only by the villagers. The
155 Mbuti recognize man's inability to control the weather, though they
092 have a small amount of very simple sympathetic weather magic; light-
789 ning strikes where it will, though again fires are covered by the Mbuti
821 during a storm in case the flames attract lightning. As for attack by a
789 witch, their attitude is somewhat ambivalent, but they do not place
765

THE NOTION OF SUPERNATURAL CONTROL

61

that way toward the villagers, who are like animals, they also are forced to recognize that the villagers may feel similarly released from laws that would otherwise prevent them from using sorcery as a means of revenge. The villagers, in point of fact, usually deny actually using sorcery, even against the Mbuti, but they admit to using the threat of it. They do, however, use the doctor, who also has access to supernatural powers for the social good, but this involves religion rather than witchcraft or sorcery. It is mentioned here because the Mbuti consider the power, not the agent. Be it witch, sorcerer or doctor, it makes no difference; the Mbuti still has no recourse but flight.

Even flight, however, will not entirely remove the sneaking fear that persists despite expressed disbelief in these supernatural powers. And that power is perhaps no small factor in effectively giving the villagers some measure of control, though the villagers happily do not realize it. They simply believe in the efficacy of their magic, and of their supernatural powers.

The extent of the control that comes this way is difficult to measure, and it has to be balanced against the extent to which the situation drives the Mbuti into an even greater reliance upon their forest world, separating the two worlds still further. It certainly can be seen to operate effectively in inducing reluctant Mbuti to fulfill specific bargains. I did not come across any instances where the actual or threatened use of supernatural powers was invoked to control the normal course of the exchange relationship. But there were a number of instances over a twelve-month period in which Epulu villagers invoked supernatural powers to revenge themselves against Mbuti who had behaved with particular irresponsibility.

Three of the cases were of alleged sorcery. Sefu of Epulu village claimed that two Mbuti had accepted beans from him and had not sent him the meat they had promised in return. He said he had employed a sorcerer to make the Mbuti bleed to death if they did not give him the meat. But he lost courage when he thought that the administrator might get to hear of it, and he recanted. The Mbuti concerned sent him a token amount of meat and the matter was considered as settled.

André, headman of the village known by the name of his late father, Effundi Somali, claimed to have himself invoked supernatural aid against an Mbuti who refused to pay him money received by him when he captured a live okapi and brought it to the government station de chasse.

C
754
434
P
439
tion de chance. This curse, which was of leprosy, was never lifted, to my knowledge, and caused some uneasiness among the Mbuti but mainly anger. So far it has not been effective, either in obtaining the money for André or in bringing leprosy to the Mbuti.

The other case involved the headman of the nearby Ngwana village, who claimed that three Mbuti from the Epulu band had taken a sack of rice from him and had promised meat in return but never sent it. He allegedly employed a sorcerer to curse the Mbuti to death if they did not send the meat. Within a matter of three months all three had died. Two died evidently of stomach disorders that might have been due to or aggravated by poison, which is sometimes used by the Ngwana; the third man died a long way off in the forest under conditions that would make it unlikely that the death was due to poison, though quite likely it was due in part to fear. All three were young and healthy.

P
754
4177
[521]
T
[126]
[192]
There were almost certainly other instances that I did not hear of, where it was claimed that sorcery had actually been used. There were innumerable instances when it was threatened, and also innumerable instances of accusations of witchcraft involving Mbuti. In fact, talk of village witchcraft and sorcery was among the major topics of conversation in forest camps, particularly just prior to and following a visit to the village. Although the Mbuti had no beliefs of their own concerning the manipulation of such supernatural powers, and although they were reluctant to believe that it was more than either a hoax or, as most of them put it, the mere stupidity (*mbefu*) of the villagers, it nonetheless occupied their thoughts. The death or sickness that inevitably followed a curse, happening sooner or later to someone in the same family, was generally accepted by the Mbuti as coincidental no matter how hard the villagers tried to relate it to the curse; but the occasional exceptional instance, such as that quoted, when the three Mbuti died within three months, was enough to cause serious doubt and fear.

to village boys. In some cases the Mbuti's *kpura* may choose him as *karé* to his own son, and in other cases he may see some advantage in having his Mbuti form a *karé* pact with another villager, as this forms an economic and political link, then, between the two villagers. It seems that, generally, *karé* brotherhood is formed between Mbuti and their *kpura*'s patrikins, however. It is believed that this places the two in an indissoluble politico-economic relationship for the rest of their lives, a relationship of subordination as far as the Mbuti is concerned, and one that will persist into the afterlife of the same individuals.

The villager concepts of afterlife are not clearly defined, but it is accepted without question that individuals continue to exist after death and may, if qualified by initiation and by adherence throughout life to the tribal code of behavior, join the ancestors, who live together much as they did in the present world, and continue to concern themselves with the present world. It is also accepted without question that these must be Mbuti in the afterworld, just as there are in the present. If one asks why must these be Mbuti, the invariable answer is in terms of the economic dependence of the villagers upon the Mbuti in the present world, the assumption being that the same needs will exist in the afterworld. But the economic relationship is the most easily expressed and recognized, however mistakenly, and is not necessarily therefore the most important. The political relationship is also recognized, though not quite so easily expressed because of the greater incompatibility of the systems of the two peoples. But there is also a ritual relationship which is certainly as powerful as the others, if not more so, and it is just as much a part of the *karé* pact as are the economic and political aspects.

Karé partners are expected to trade with each other, though not necessarily exclusively. This allows for the formation of *karé* brotherhood between individuals who are not in a *kpura*/Mbuti relationship, and is an attempt on the part of the villager to regularize the situation should his Mbuti join a band trading with a neighboring village. To have a *kpura* in one village and a *karé* in another, strategically chosen, is considered equally advantageous by Mbuti and villager. As far as the Mbuti is concerned it provides him with two groups of people who feel under some kind of an obligation toward him, and who need him. As far as the *kpura* is concerned it gives him someone he can effectively claim against should his Mbuti decide to trade in that direction. As far as the villager *karé* is concerned it is another Mbuti

VILLAGE RELIGION

67

to his credit, increasing his prestige and also somewhat increasing his trading opportunities. The trade is mainly thought of in terms of meat and labor on the side of the Mbuti, village foods, clothes and tobacco on the side of the villager. A fairly friendly relationship does sometimes develop between two *karé*, who, regardless of the status differentiation, undergo the whole *nkumbi* together, suffering the same ordeals side by side, and are perhaps more united by age than they are separated by the status differentiation. C
608
439
571
P
608
439
571
177*

The political aspects of *karé* brotherhood reinforce the economics, not only serving as a basis for compensation against a migrant Mbuti, but also for extending the *karé* relationship to link the Mbuti's *kpara* with the village boy's father. The relationship is primarily between individuals, but it nonetheless creates felt obligations between the families involved, and one family of villagers may invoke the help of another family in a dispute, through an Mbuti *karé* link. The kinship ramifications of *karé* brotherhood are still far from clear from the village point of view, and it seems that the introduction of the Mbuti to the system may have somewhat disorganized the traditional system. For the Mbuti there is no connection between *karé* and kinship, and effectively there can be none among the villagers. If there were, then the formation of a *karé* tie between *kpara* and their own Mbuti would be incestuous, and the formation of such ties with unrelated families, conceived of as a sibling relationship, would effectively prohibit marriage in that direction and create an impossibly confused dual kinship system. Yet *karé* do refer to each other sometimes as "brother," and take advantage of their thus extended kinship relations. E
182
608
571

The religious aspects of *karé* brotherhood are far less easy to define, and far less easy for the investigator to determine because they are seldom, if ever, discussed. I have never heard such a discussion, unless I instigated it, except on the occasion of the death of a villager. On the death of an Mbuti it is generally only the other aspects of the *karé* relationship that are discussed, involving liability for funerary expenses, compensation for outstanding obligations, divination of the cause of death. But when a villager dies the Mbuti *karé* is introduced into the heart of the funerary ritual, having to perform divers functions such as beating the villager's wives, leading an attack upon all close kin of the deceased, conveniently clustered together for the purpose, "to drive away evil," as the villagers explained it among themselves and to me. The Mbuti *karé* is also made responsible for providing certain foods for the deceased and, I believe, certain herbs C
608
563
571
764
P
608
571
177*
764

[P. 81]

CHAPTER 7

Flux and Instability

Not yet having examined the forest context, we cannot completely dispose of the question of economic dependence or interdependence. At the moment, it appears that the Mbuti do not need the villagers except for luxuries which may in time become necessities, and it equally seems that the villagers do not need the Mbuti except as laborers on the plantations, in particular with the cotton harvest, and this is a very recent need introduced by Belgian administration. The most that one can say about the economic aspect of the relationship is that it appears to be one of mutual convenience. The villagers *could* hunt (and in areas where there are few or no Mbuti, they do) but they prefer not to go into the forest if it can be avoided. The Mbuti *could* live successfully off the forest at their indigenous level of technology, but trade with the villagers makes life that much easier.

If we look carefully at daily life in any village, the economic aspect of the relationship fades even further into the background. Mbuti can occasionally be seen bringing in from the forest meat or other forest products needed by the villagers, such as the *fito* saplings and phrynum leaves for their houses. More often they will be seen helping with odd domestic chores, such as fetching water or firewood, house-building, or guarding plantations. Mbuti women help the village women pound manioc and to thresh and winnow the locally grown dry rice. They also help the village women carry loads of plantains to and from the market.

But mostly, if any Mbuti are to be seen at all, they will be seen lazing on the *baraza* of their *kpara*, being fed and offered ends of cigarettes, or bribed with liquor to put on a dance that all the villagers will come to watch. Such dances are wild and erotic, accompanied by anything from one to three or four drums, never by song.

It is also possible to see Mbuti scrounging food from villagers

FLUX AND INSTABILITY

83

we have already seen that in place of system and control there is, apparently, only flux and instability that militate against system and control.

By flux I refer to the fact that the Mbuti appear to adopt village institutions but not the village system of interrelationships. In this way there is a disconnectedness in the village context of the Mbuti that enables both sides to refer to whichever institution is convenient at the moment to establish a relationship of the moment. Thus an Mbuti may be asked to help one villager on the ground of their *karé* relationship, and expected by another to help because of the hereditary *kpara* relationship. Considerations of simple economic exchange between the same Mbuti and still other villagers may override either of the above considerations at another moment. Thus the Mbuti has a number of possible ways in which he can link himself with the village and the villagers, at different and distinct times. The converse also applies, and if a villager finds his hereditary claims ineffective he may call on other Mbuti because of the *karé* relationship, and so forth.

In view of the nomadic nature of the hunting band and, as we shall see, of its composition, this "system" of flux is the only one that could possibly pertain. But it leads inevitably to instability because of the consequent lack of any one system of control. In the same way that the Mbuti can hop from one conflicting set of relationships to another, so he can hop from one system of control to another. By Mbuti rejection of the total village system and by what proves to be an opposition of a totally different set of values, the villager ultimately is denied virtually all control, and the Mbuti similarly is denied any absolute security in his relationships with the villagers.

However, the loss of control is more serious to the villagers than is the loss of security to the Mbuti, and it is also more complete, for the villagers are themselves bound by the supernatural sanctions through which they vainly attempt to impose control upon the Mbuti. The whole situation is incompatible with the notion of economic interdependence, yet there is no denying the actual relationship between the two groups of people. Nor can one deny that within a framework of flux and instability, the relationship is persistent, so there must be some system. If that system is so evidently unrelated to economic factors, we have to look elsewhere for its focal point.

There are not all that many basic relationships that can exist be-

[P.148]

CHAPTER 10

The Economy

THE BAND AS AN ECONOMIC UNIT

621 We have seen the limited importance of the family in the lineage
613 context, and that the band itself can only be defined, as a perishing
602 entity, in terms of territory. Its composition and size fluctuate in
response to a number of factors, among which the current economic
context is of undoubted importance, regulating the size to a large ex-
tent, but also sometimes affecting the composition. We can clearly
say that the band is not a unilineal institution, as seen in our camp
plans for both archers and net-hunters, and in many instances even
if we consider the band as a bilateral unit, lineage considerations ap-
pear to be minimal in determining its composition.

621 We now consider the territorial band as an economic unit. When
• 439 discussing the Mbuti/Villager relationship (p. 33 seq.), we assumed
that there was no economic necessity involved in Mbuti dependence
on the villagers for plantation foods or village utensils. This is the
first point to be considered here, in order to justify our treating the
band as an economic unit without reference to village economy.

621 To begin with, it can be clearly stated that nowhere in the Ituri,
439 except possibly in the triangle bounded by the three roads linking
261 Beni, Irumu and Mambasa, have I ever come across a hunting band
suffering from any shortage of forest foods, unless the band was at
that time camped near the village. Further, in the heart of the forest
I have come across many bands that are too many days away from the
nearest village to maintain any kind of supply line, and that have ex-
isted solely on forest foods for from three to six months, with ease. It
has been obvious, however, that in those bands there was considerable
hankering for the luxuries supplied by the village, and there is no
doubt that in time these luxuries will become necessities, given a
continuation of the situation.

THE ECONOMY

149 p

The very fact alone that each band has clearly defined boundaries¹²¹ and that each hunting territory borders on two or three others may⁶²¹ be taken as an indication of the self-sufficiency of the over-all region⁶²² and of each territory. Were such fixed and adjacent boundaries to exist with the accepted and generally practiced custom of non-trespass, then where each territory was not self-sufficient trespass or warfare would be bound to occur, and there would have to be some institutionalized manner of dealing with the situation. Mbuti society has no institutional means of dealing with any such situation, nor is there any indication that it ever has had either the institutions or the need for them. The social organization, such as it is, indicates that each band within its territory is to the largest possible extent independent of its neighbors in terms of politics and economics. It might indeed be argued that territorial self-sufficiency, and consequent territorial demarcation, were achieved only with the advent of the village tribes and their plantations. There is, however, not the slightest evidence for this, and the evident abundance of the forest is a strong counterargument.

At all times of year there is in the forest an abundant supply of mushrooms, roots, berries, nuts and herbs, some fruits and some leafy vegetables. The very fact that the Mbuti exchange meat for plantation foods and villager utensils indicates that there is at least ample meat for Mbuti needs, with a surplus for trade. And again it is worth noting the fact that the Mbuti themselves equate hunger with noise and laziness, both perfectly rational explanations of poor hunting and gathering.¹ On those rare occasions when the hunting, even far off in the forest, really is poor, it is considered exceptional enough to call out the *molimo* society, normally reserved for death.

As far as items of material culture are concerned, we have probably indicated sufficiently (p. 33 seq.) the extent of Mbuti dependence upon the village, and the degree of its necessity. It is more significant and telling to look at the structural aspects of the economic relationship. Here we immediately see that the structure is very heavily one-sided. From the village point of view it is perfectly clear-cut, depending on the two alleged institutions of *kari* blood brotherhood and hereditary ownership, although, owing to the constant flux in

¹ The equation of hunger and death is a common one to the Mbuti, who say "Hunger kills me" instead of "I am hungry." But the symbolism goes deeper, and a surfeit of food is considered the *sine qua non* of a *molimo* death festival—the primary focus of which is not on death but on the continuity of life.

^P
439 band composition, these institutions have little direct economic ap-
439 plication. However, they do serve as a means by which any villager
439 may assert a claim of any Mbuti. Villagers frequently enter into
439 agreements and become involved in disputes with each other as a
439 result, but nonetheless a villager whose *karé* or hereditary Mbuti is
439 supplying another villager with meat may demand either compensa-
439 tion, a share, or rights to the services of one of his fellow-villager's
439 Mbuti.

^P
439 This, however, is still from the villager point of view. From the
439 Mbuti point of view the only relevant factors are strictly economic:
439 they will exchange meat and their services whenever it suits them, for
439 whatever goods suit them, with whichever villager suits them. The
439 subsequent complications due to any breach of *karé* or kinship con-
439 siderations does not affect them in any way. Owing to the variable
439 nature of Mbuti wants and the whimsical nature of his behavior when
439 dealing with villagers, there can be no attempt to establish any kind
439 of equivalent rates of exchange.

^P
439 Whereas with the villagers the exchange is institutionalized and
439 integrated with the over-all social structure, with the Mbuti it is not.
439 It is in the realm of individual and nonformalized behavior, not even
439 necessarily linking the various members of a nuclear family. Since the
439 exchange almost invariably takes place in the village, this may be
439 taken as an indication of the breakdown of forest bonds among Mbuti
439 living in a village. This fact is extended when, rarely, a villager visits
439 a forest camp in the hopes of insuring at least an immediate and tem-
439 porary supply of meat. His very presence, if permitted, changes the
439 context from forest to village, and the hunting band becomes, with
439 respect to the visiting villager, a village band, with corresponding
439 social relations. The Mbuti only permit such visits if it is to their ad-
439 vantage, and even then they conceal with ease the game they catch
439 daily and only give the villager what they wish to give.⁸

^P
439 In view of the absence of any necessary dependence of the Mbuti
439 upon the villager, for food or material, and even more in absence of
439 any mutually accepted institutional relationship, we may regard such
439 exchange as takes place with the village as having little or no bearing
439 on the structure of the Mbuti forest economy, and we need consider it

^C
[648] ⁸ Villagers consider it perfectly legitimate to cross their own territorial boundaries to
visit any of "their" Mbuti who might be in someone else's village area, providing the
visit is to a forest camp. This is one of several indications that the villagers clearly
acknowledge the forest as belonging to the Mbuti; the offering of the firstfruits of a new
plantation is another.

THE ECONOMY

151

no further, except to point again to the obvious potential relationship between hunting technology and village exchange, the net-hunters being more easily able to acquire an excess of meat than the archers. However, it is difficult to ascertain just how far this relationship is effectual, for even the net-hunters maintain minimal exchange with the villagers, and only on the same nonformalized individual basis. There is rather more likelihood among the archers for there to exist a *capita* or *sultani* who will convey to his fellow-Mbuti the wishes of the villagers although he has no authority to take any other action, and this may be seen as being due, in part at least, to the less productive technology of the archers, and in part to the greater prevalence of fragmentation into small sub-bands.

DIVISION OF LABOR

There is little to say about the division of labor in Mbuti society, but most important is the fact that there is no religious belief or ritual practice that relates any activity to any one sex, nor is there any consecration of those everyday tasks that normally fall into the jurisdiction of one sex or the other. This, of course, is what might be expected from the personal terminology, which differentiates the sexes clearly only at the parental level. Basically men hunt and make hunting equipment, and organize the *molimo* festivals. The women gather vegetable foods and other forest produce, build the huts, prepare and cook the food; they organize the *elimo* festival. Men make bark cloth, women make baskets. Children take part in all the economic activities. But women help make the nets, and they invariably make the twine from which the nets are made. Among the net-hunters the women, girls and young children act as beaters and are thus an integral part of the hunt, as they are among the archers in the archer *bagbe* hunt. Men of both archer and net-hunter bands have no hesitation in gathering mushrooms and other vegetable foods when they have the opportunity. In both groups it is primarily and almost exclusively the men who gather the honey, for women seldom climb trees.

Women take part in the *molimo* and, although it is a small part, it is a highly significant one. The *elimo*, though organized by the women and stemming from the maturation of a girl, is of equal importance to the male youths who play a vital role in the festival. All in all, sex does not seem to be of any particular significance in determining the structure of Mbuti economic activity. Of far greater significance is age,

THE ECONOMY

175

The movement of bees seems to be somewhat less even than that of game in the Ituri Forest, and it sometimes happens during the honey season that one hunting territory may have a glut of honey while a neighboring territory has a scarcity. In that case the less fortunate band will either poach, and hope not to get caught and so have to share, or else it will ask permission to camp on foreign territory. In the latter case there will probably be an exchange of residents between the two bands, the host band thus being able to insure its rights. (As often as not, due to the composite nature of the bands, the encroaching band will have among its female or even its male members a relative, if not an original member, of the resident band. However, the loyalty of such individuals is divided, and is generally given to their present hunting band; otherwise undiscovered poaching would be impossible.)

The camps are generally as far apart as possible, unless the encroaching band is small, or a mere subsection that is tentatively seeking a re-alignment with the resident band. Similarly with hunting, joint hunting camps are exceptional, and to my own knowledge occur only if there is a common desire to hunt elephants which may be in one or both territories. The purpose of such joint hunts generally involves village economics, in particular the supply of ivory to the villagers. In itself elephant-hunting demands only a handful of men at the most, and more than one dead elephant would be an *embarras de richesses*, to say the least.

It is not surprising, then, that there are no institutionalized means of regulating economic relationships between bands. Such co-operation as does occur is completely outside the normal economic frame of reference. There is certainly no exchange of goods or food between bands, except insofar as a visiting family generally brings with it some meat, honey, nuts or mushrooms to share with their hosts. Each territory not only provides a sufficiency of food but an equally ample sufficiency of all the other material necessities of life.

The only true economic relationship that persists between bands is concerned with maintaining each territorial band at its optimum economic strength of composition. The overenlargement of one band and the diminution of another leads to a relocation of some of the families of the larger band in the territory of the smaller. Owing to the constant flux in composition, however, this is only a temporary relationship between two temporary populations, and does not in-

P 176

WAYWARD SERVANTS

621 involve any reciprocal rights or obligations, the increased efficiency of
628 each band being the reward of each.

ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN BAND AND VILLAGE

439 This has already been dealt with to some extent, and has been seen
621 to involve a question of mutual convenience rather than of economic
121 necessity. What needs to be emphasized, perhaps, is that there can in
C effect be an effective economic relationship only between a territorial
439 band and a territorial village, without regard to the composition of
621 either. The territorial village is likely to be far more consistent in
121 composition, moving less frequently, less far and less at random than
C the band, and above all following a clearly patrilineal/patrilocal sys-
[611] tem of descent and marriage. Any village, then, may be said to be in an
[591] economic relationship with any hunting band whose territory includes
that village. In addition, it may have a relationship with other bands
whose territories are sufficiently close to allow easy exchange.

P The band is similarly in relationship with a village or villages ac-
439 cording to territorial considerations. Within that band each individ-
621 ual will also have personal-exchange relationships with his villager
608 *kare* brother, with his *kpara*, and with any other individual villager in
571 the local village if neither his *kare* nor his *kpara* are there. He may
maintain any, all or none of these individual relationships as it pleases
him; there is no institutional means of compelling him one way or
the other from either the band or the village. He decides entirely in
terms of his own needs, those of his family and the general needs of
the band. If he finds himself in conflict with the band then he either
forms a subsection with two or three others or he goes to visit another
band. Generally, however, a band tolerates complete individualism in
this respect. The obligation to share, however, does not apply to vil-
[156] lage foods. Any Mbuti who does not enter into an exchange rela-
tionship with a villager, or who does not steal what he wants, goes
without unless his relatives or friends voluntarily offer him of their

OWN.

P The decision of the individual Mbuti often shows rather more fore-
439 thought than is shown or called for in his other economic activities.
608 The probable length of absence of or from his *kare* or *kpara* is taken
571 into consideration. If an Mbuti has a particularly generous exchange
partner, he will, in that partner's absence, maintain at least nominal

THE ECONOMY

177 P

exchange with his partner's next of kin. If his partner is within a day's walk or two he may visit him briefly, bringing a suitable gift of meat with him. Even on returning to his *kpwa's* village, an Mbuti may maintain exchange with a generous villager elsewhere.

There is no system of equivalents, only the obligation to reciprocate. Indeed it is doubtful if we can really even talk of it as theft when the Mbuti raid a plantation and carry off what they want, back to the forest, without leaving anything for the villagers, whom they may or may not even know. The villagers recognize their need of the Mbuti if they are to be spared the necessity of going into the forest themselves. They also recognize that the territory, even that on which the village and plantation are built, was formerly, and in a sense still is, all Mbuti territory, and that they therefore have special privileges. When a raid takes place, the established villagers assume that a reciprocal presentation of forest foods, other forest products, or of service will be made at a future date.

On the village side, *hard* and *kpwa* relationships may well operate and persist over long periods of time if the individuals are wise and just. If they are not, then the same relationships, in village society, afford an institutional means of regulating the situation with any other villagers with whom the Mbuti may take up. Among the Mbuti no such considerations or mechanisms pertain.

In the latter days of Belgian administration, when increasing demands were made upon the villagers to produce certain cash crops and to supply labor, the villagers found themselves in correspondingly greater need of Mbuti labor to help them with their plantation work. Demands would be made of a whole band to come and camp near the plantation for several weeks on end, to help with the sowing or the harvesting. The demand would be made by the village chief or head man to the appointed "*capita*" or "*sultani*" of the Mbuti band. Once notified, the band then decided the matter by common discussion, any dissenters being free to leave and go their own way without any attached stigma. The considerations involved in arriving at a decision were entirely practical and material, and a decision always stood ready to be reversed at a moment's notice if it was found not to be in the favor of the band.

The work entailed on the plantation in no way involved groups comparable to those formed in hunting or gathering activities; consequently in the village a different set of interpersonal relationships

* These terms derive from the Belgians and the Arab slave traders, respectively.

178

WATWARD SERVANTS

exists among the Mbuti, and mutual obligations that exist in the forest are no longer practicable and so are no longer considered as binding. Generally there is a fractioning into individual family or even smaller elements, each individual or family having a villager exchange partner. However, some villagers with larger and more productive plantations, or with other assets (such as the blacksmith), may attract a number of Mbuti who thus form a temporary co-operative group while in the village. Any such bonds formed are purely of the moment and in that context, and are shed immediately on return to the forest. For the moment, however, they are real and binding, falling under village sanctions and even to some extent subject to village jurisdiction. To this latter, however, the Mbuti only submit so far as it is convenient. In a case of inter-Mbuti dispute in the village context, the litigants are likely, for personal and individual reasons, to accept villager arbitration. In the case of a dispute between an Mbuti and a villager, however, it will be the convenience of the band that is considered as well as that of the individual.

ECONOMIC AUTHORITY

Such organization as exists for economic purposes arises in direct response to the immediate demands of the present context. It is constant only as long as the context is constant, and any continuity derives from contextual continuity, not from any hardening of traditional arteries or inherited patterns of leadership or behavior. The only structural aspects of the economy that persist in other realms are those related to the principles of territory and age.

Ecological and technological considerations determine the general pattern of subsistence activities, hunting and gathering; this pattern is modified according to the desire of the Mbuti for village luxuries or to the pressure put upon them by their villager neighbors. As any of these considerations changes, so does the pattern. There is no attempt to control or dominate either the geographical or human environment.

Insofar as organization is in the nature of a response, then, leadership is minimal, in the economic realm. All major decisions are taken by common consent, as in other realms of Mbuti life. Men and women have equal say, hunting and gathering being equally important to the economy. Young married couples and youths have the most to say, being the most active hunters and gatherers, but while ability as a hunter carries some weight, too much ability may lead to

THE ECONOMY

179

ridicule. That is, a man who displays himself as a great hunter, and
boasts of his achievements too loudly, is somewhat distrusted, and
any attempt on his part to use his reputation to gain more say than
others will lead immediately to ridicule.

One other consideration determines the extent of influence of a
man or woman in economic matters, and that is their knowledge of
the territory. Thus, no matter how deserving of respect as hunters, a
visiting Mbuti family who do not know the territory well will have
little to say regardless of their kinship, age or other considerations.
They will nonetheless be expected to take part in discussions.

It is not possible to talk of organization of economic relations with
other bands, for such relationships are so rare and diverse. And insofar
as the exchange relationship between the Mbuti and the villagers is an
individual one, there is little call for organization or leadership there
either. When there is call for a joint decision concerning the village,
even if it does not directly concern hunting and gathering but, say,
the desire of the villagers for entertainment for a wedding feast, or for
harvest labor in the plantations, it is still treated by the Mbuti as a
hunting issue and it is the same people, the younger married couples,
who have the most say. It is made clear in Mbuti discussions con-
cerning a projected move to a village camp that, for them, the village
is regarded as another hunting ground. A move villageward of the
whole band is to be considered in terms of the amount of energy and
the nature of the effort to be expended, and of the consequent, pro-
spective rewards.

The same pattern of organization and leadership pertains only in
the making of the decision, however. From the moment of arrival
in the village, the band ceases to operate as such and will only as-
semble for general discussion, in the forest manner, when contem-
plating a return to the forest, or if it is deemed profitable to organize
a hunt for the specific intent of securing meat for the villagers.

It is only in the village, then, that the nuclear family can really
be considered as a separate economic identity (this is particularly
true of the net-hunters, rather less so for the archers). In the realm
of forest subsistence the individual and the family are subordinated
to the band or, perhaps better, become immersed in the band, for
they almost lose their identity. Family membership is of no conse-
quence in determining economic responsibility; age and territoriality
are the more important factors. Any tendency toward charismatic
leadership is countered by ridicule, and any persistence on the part of
the hunter may lead to his being given the job of representing the

685
[224]
[462] 34. During a hunt Ekianga's unmarried niece, Ekimanji, had charge of his two spears and lost these together with her own basket, full of meat. Her story was that she was standing about, waiting for the rest to join up after a beat, when she had to answer a call of nature. She went a few yards away, and on return found the two spears and the basket gone. She called out, and Masalito, who was nearby, came running over. She asked him to stand there while she went and searched, which she did. She could find no traces. He also searched, and neither could he. It then began to rain and they returned to camp.

[186]
[183] The next day the hunt went back to the spot and searched all over but found nothing. They even repeated the hunt in the same spot, casting the nets and beating toward them. Nobody offered any suggestions as to what could have happened, other than that they must have been taken. Not a single individual was hinted at directly or indirectly. One of the hunters suggested it was a villager, for Mbuti don't steal, but everyone knew that no villager was anywhere about in the forest during the hunt. However, the explanation, weak as it was, was better than none and, if not accepted, it was certainly not denied. The matter was not mentioned again.

578
DISPUTES CONCERNING THE VILLAGE

*177
186
436
[621] 35. It might be thought that the village would be a common source of dispute. Far from being so, the village most frequently occurs in disputes as above, as a means of ending a dispute without settling the blame on any Mbuti and thus hastening the process of fusion. Even money is assimilated into the forest pattern of distribution of food, insofar as it is ever brought into the forest (see 29, above). The only real dispute over money in my records was because the money was received for a spear which had been stolen from one villager and sold back to another, and it was difficult to assess the correct apportionment of the "game" (a hundred francs) between the "hunters."

*177
186
[152]
[514]
[224] The village, however, was often being blamed for ill health, and with frequent justification, for sanitation, which was no problem for the Mbuti in the forest, was a major one in the village. The village also frequently took the blame for poor hunting, particularly if some individual or some group in the band (e.g., the women who did not beat) seemed to be genuinely to blame.

*177
439 One dispute of major proportions, and one of the few which occasioned direct action, did, however, have its cause in the village. The

GOVERNMENT: INTERNAL

215

village itself was being pressed by the administration to increase its productivity at the same time that it was being pressed to supply the administration with more labor. In turn the villagers tried to press the Mbuti into supplying them with more food. Accustomed to a bare subsistence economy, the Mbuti could never quite see the necessity, nor did they altogether feel it was right or that it would be pleasing to the forest. Their belief, as far as I could determine, was not so much that they would be punished by the forest, but rather that the hunt would "be closed," that they would not get the unlawful surplus, that they might not even get enough for themselves.

To counter this the villagers offered divers kinds of medicine* for use in the forest, and agreed to make even more powerful medicine in the village. Sometimes the villagers offer to come into the forest, with a ritual specialist, to make medicine. The Mbuti tend to allow this, as it is profitable to them. Occasionally, however, the habit lingers, and whether or not *enjo* was originally a village or an Mbuti custom, it is now considered as a village trick, and disliked as such. *Anjo* is made by taking an antelope horn and filling it with a paste made from special parts of the antelope, charmed black. This paste is then applied with a stick to the body of the hunter, to convey to him the senses of the animal.

This custom could sit perfectly well among the archers, where hunting is on a more individual basis. But among the net-hunters its use was taken as a sign of desire for personal gain above communal gain. On one occasion, when the hunting was not particularly good, *enjo* horns were rounded up from all over the camp, eight in all, and destroyed in the central fire. There was some protest from the owners, but not much. It was generally agreed that this made everyone the same, and that was how things should be.

From all the above, and from the rest of the disputes recorded in my notes, totalling 124, not counting the petty daily squabbles of no apparent import other than as an indication of bad temper, one of the most significant features is the small number of cases in which any

* Among these medicines is that encouraged by the Arab slave traders in search of ivory, specifically to give success in the elephant hunt. Known as *enomba*, *inhumba*, and divers other spellings, it is sometimes confused with a love medicine of the same name, and even more frequently with the *molimo* of the Mbuti, the word *enomba* or *inhumba* being used to describe the Mbuti *molimo* when speaking in KINgwana, language of the Arabized Bantu tribe. It is perfectly possible that the two practices became intermingled, both, from the Mbuti point of view, being concerned with the pleasure of the forest.

GOVERNMENT: EXTERNAL

233

self being maneuvered into an awkward situation may suddenly leave altogether and go somewhere else. Neither lineal seniority nor political authority (chieftainship) are ever even mentioned in any attempt to influence a family's movement. When Manyalibo and Masini, who shared the same grandfather (Manyalibo being the lineal elder), fell out and moved into separate camps, it was Masini who took the initiative, and although Manyalibo claimed that Masini ought to respect him because of age, he never suggested that Masini was subject to his authority. He even stated openly that Masini had the right to move wherever he wanted, but that it was not good for "brothers" to separate.

Thus interfamily exchange can only be regarded as a direct relationship between two families which, if they happen to be in separate bands, creates a relationship between their respective bands allowing for further such interchanges. Such bands respond to each other's needs with regard to optimum economic size, occasionally cooperate, and possess an additional mechanism for the settlement of interband disputes concerning trespass or marriage exchange.

BAND TO VILLAGE

In examining relationships between the band and the village we find the same distinction, only more clearly made, between formal and informal relationships that are the most effective.

But whereas even latent antagonism between bands is minimal, there is considerable latent antagonism between band and village, manifest not only in opposed systems of economic exploitation but also in opposed systems of values. Open conflict would bring advantage to neither group, and we have to think, in view of the lack of necessary economic interdependence, of the exchange in connection with this antagonism. It does indeed offer each group ample opportunity for insulting the other, though individual exchange relationships sometimes remain amicable, and even intimate, for considerable lengths of time.

The outward objective, at least, of the general Mbuti/Villager relationship is one of economic exchange, for mutual convenience. There are a number of formal levels at which such exchange, and the necessary associated negotiations, may be conducted, using a corresponding number of media:

Congo-Kinshasa FO1

234

WAYWARD SERVANTS

1. Band/Village: capita/Chief
2. Lineage/Lineage: Lineage elder/Kpers
3. Individual/Individual: Kard/Kard

We shall deal with each in turn to determine the formal nature of the relationship, and the degree to which it is effective.

Capita/Chief

The relationship of the band as a whole to the village as a whole would be a simple and effective one if the band were, as the villagers claim it should be, a unilineal entity based on the principle of patrilineal descent. However, as we have seen, the band is generally composite, and in any case its composition is constantly changing. Short territorial proximity, however, encourages a relationship of economic exchange between these two units, regardless of the composition of either. Generally speaking there is no need for the village to relate to the band as a whole, food exchange being more easily effected at an interfamilial or interpersonal level. However, under the foreign economic pressures mentioned earlier, at certain times villages found it necessary to have the massed help of all the Mbuti they could muster. In such a case the village Chief summoned the Mbuti capita and made his wishes known. The capita relayed these wishes to the band, which then did whatever it thought expedient, after general discussion.

The capita seems to assume more importance as an institution in the villages of the archer area, to the east of the Epabu. However, even there the villagers themselves admit that the institution is foreign to the Mbuti. I have not once heard it claimed otherwise, by Mbuti or villagers. Among the archers, as among the net-hunters, old men and women are accorded respect, but they have no authority and their area of influence is limited in accordance with their age, and does not include the village. Such elders, then, have no more say than any other Mbuti concerning village matters pertaining to the band as a whole. But village affairs do not fall within the province of any age group, and the capita finds himself having to deal separately with each family, if indeed he takes that much trouble at all. Sometimes he may do so if a villager accompanies him to the camp in the hopes of adding strength to the village argument. I have seen this happen among the archers as among the net-hunters, in each case with a direct plea for all Mbuti to go to the village to help with the cotton harvest.

GOVERNMENT: EXTERNAL

227 C

throughout his life. It is also a question of friendship with the villagers, but for him the relationship is further compelled by his belief in his own tribal law, a compulsion not felt by the Mbuti. The Mbuti sometimes exploit this relationship with a *karé* as they may also do with their *apara* for whom they feel no friendship, knowing that the strength of tribal law, and the fear of supernatural sanctions upon themselves, will bring at least a grudging response.

Although essentially an individual relationship rather than a band relationship, failure on the part of an Mbuti to respond to his *karé* is considered by the villagers as a violation of village law, and can be made into a lineage/lineage or a band/village issue, but with predictable lack of success because of the absence of any effective agency of control. However, the attempt is sometimes made, and the band may at least be held responsible, in violation of *karé* brotherhood, for the actions of one of its members.

None of these formal relationships, then, brings about much effective economic exchange, and the political relationship is correspondingly ineffective. The mechanisms for political relationship are there, but their use is made impossible by the whole process of flux in Mbuti society. At the best these mechanisms are taken up and used momentarily when it is found to be mutually advantageous.

Individual Economic Relationships

There is, however, the last level, that of the nuclear family to the nuclear family, by which the band relates to a village. This is the effective level at which the bulk of economic exchange takes place among the Epulu Mbuti, and among most other net-hunting bands I have seen. In view of the flux that characterizes Mbuti society, it is indeed the only level that could provide any realistic basis of relationship.

It may not even necessarily be a family-to-family relationship. Individual members of the Mbuti family may go their own way and relate as such to village individuals. But once formed, these relationships are likely to remain fairly constant, for as long as the Mbuti family is hunting within that territory, or within reasonable reach. Several such attachments might be formed by the Mbuti, though generally not more than one in any one village. This leads to effective economic exchange but it provides no basis whatsoever for relating the band to the village, and it offers the villagers no more opportunity for control than they already have; namely, the fondness of the Mbuti for village luxuries.

for village luxuries. Bribery, indeed, may be said to be the only effective control the villagers have over the Mbuti. But it is short-lived and costly, and is on an individual or familial basis at the most. As far as internal relations are concerned, the band clearly exists as a territorial unit composed of a number of nuclear families cooperating in economic food quest. The Epulu band, and nearly all others studied, are characterized by a composite nature, negating the possibility of lineal authority. Any form of central authority is further negated by the constant changing of band composition. Leadership exists in respect to different fields at different age levels, and is nowhere centered in a single individual. Any attempt at the assumption of individual authority, or even of excessive influence, is sharply countered by ridicule or ostracism.

There is consequently no central leadership, in the form of an individual or even of a council, with which the centralized village leadership can deal in political terms. Nor is there any lineal leadership, let alone any stable lineal unit, with which village lineal units can relate, except in theory. The institution of *karé* brotherhood is primarily an individual relationship, and although its abuse can enlarge the relationship to a band/village level, there is again no mechanism of effective relationship at that level. Therefore the *karé* relationship, insofar as it is effective, only relates individuals.

Effective economic relationship of a stable nature can be seen to exist only between individuals or between families, determined by territorial considerations and by mutual satisfaction. The only control arises from these considerations, heightened by the Mbuti addiction to certain village foods. However, this fragments the band to such an extent that we can say the band simply ceases to exist, as such, in relationship to any village community. Neither the Chief nor the *capita* has the slightest authority or control over the band; flux renders a lineal interrelationship impossible, and we are left with no more than an agglomeration of person-to-person exchange relationships that may be economically effective but convey no political control to either side, the nuclear family being the largest effective unit, and frequently not even being that.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

(P. 228-A)

142
516
252
291
302



(412)
(437)

21. A young Mbuti mother, sitting on a log, prepares mushrooms, using a village knife. Another such knife lies across her left foot. It is probably the most widely used utensil for which the Mbuti are dependent upon the villagers, though still not indispensable.

Congo-Kinshasa FOI

P 234

WAYWARD SERVANTS

789
777
121
P
C
789
97
121
[778]
[754]
the power believed in. There is not a solitary instance to show the belief in a malevolent power against which protection must be sought. This is plainly different from village magic, which is essentially pragmatic and not in any way related to a central value system. We showed earlier (pp. 53-62) how magic does not provide a means by which the villagers can control the Mbuti. By a comparison of the two systems of magic we can see in effect how clearly they indicate major value differences despite initial outward similarities. In particular, the Mbuti attitude to the forest as a benevolent central value in their lives can be seen, and while in village magic we see only the lack of such a central value, when we examine witchcraft and sorcery we see its exact polar opposite.

186
P
[224]
[439]
And it will be remembered how (pp. 57-59) the Mbuti recognize the difference in attitudes toward magic, and put it to good use. The villagers regard Mbuti culture as impoverished in all respects, and the lack of the magic so abundant in village life is part of their argument. In making this lack of magic an excuse for the allegedly poor hunting that has deprived their *kpara* of meat, the Mbuti turn the situation nicely to their advantage, and turn the argument of the villagers against them. Thus although village magic and forest magic are different and distinct, the areas overlap in such a way as to deepen the opposition between the two worlds.

C WITCHCRAFT

754
563
186
P
*177
754
With witchcraft the situation is different, for this is something peculiar to the village world. Earlier (pp. 59-60) we showed some of the ways in which village witchcraft (often confused by the Mbuti with sorcery) impinges on forest life. Again, the villagers regard the lack of witchcraft in Mbuti culture as a sign of cultural poverty, and in their own belief in the power of witchcraft they seek to use it in their constant struggle to impose some kind of control over the hunters. However, the Mbuti again make use of the village belief in witchcraft for their own ends, using it as a means of escape from situations in which they would otherwise be culpable and stand to lose a good exchange relationship.

P
*177
754
626
In their own forest world, however, witchcraft plays no part, except insofar as it is recognized as a useful device for deflecting blame, and is thus occasionally used, tongue in cheek, to resolve a dispute. As indicated in the foregoing chapter, the prime objective in the settle-

MAGIC, WITCHCRAFT AND SORCERY

to their forest sanctuary, and describing their tactics for keeping it free of bothersome, elephant-like villagers. Hunting is not mentioned; the two spears (and in the next legend the two firebrands) are uniquely related to the *molimo*, which, as is seen in the next chapter, offers major roles to the elders and the youths; precise age levels are specified in this legend. Thus the defense of the forest is considered as part of the role of the *molimo*. There is significantly no talk of a resort to magic or witchcraft or sorcery, and the mention of the evil spirits is accompanied by no belief in them.

In the second legend, however, the first part is a very straight description of exactly how an Mbuti might cheat a villager simply by concealing a portion of his honey, whereas the second part describes how the Mbuti is himself cheated. The second part alone could be taken as another way in which Mbuti explain to villagers why they have no meat or honey for them (see a third legend at the end of this chapter for such an example), but in this juxtaposition seems to indicate a certain belief that the Mbuti themselves might be cheated in this way.

LEGEND OF DOUBLE TRICKERY

I went to the forest to collect honey. I went, I went, I went. I went very far, beyond the big river [an indication of trespass, perhaps, making it a situation displeasing to the forest; hence the ultimate defeat of the Mbuti?]. I heard the sound of bees. Way up high I saw the place of the honey. I said, "Ha! Nobody has enclosed this tree with a vine; it is my tree, it is my honey."

I sharpened my ax, very sharp indeed. I cut a vine, I fanned up my fire and put the fire [smoking embers] in my basket. I began to climb. I climbed, I climbed, I climbed. The honey was very high up, it was real honey, not *apuma* [a special fermented honey]. I reached it. I fastened the vine and I sat. I put the fire [in a leaf cone] into the hole and I blew. Much smoke came and the bees ran away. I chopped, I chopped, I chopped. While I was cutting I heard someone walking below. "Ah! Who is walking below me? It is my master [*kpara*]. He heard me cutting [the adverse aspect of noise] and followed me."

I began to sing. I sang loudly. He called to me, but I pretended that I did not hear him. I sang and I chopped. I sang, "Ah! I am chopping out honey to give to my *kpara*!" And slowly I chopped out the honey. I got a lot of it. But I only put part of it in my basket. The

539 rest I put in a place where the tree had two arms [i.e., in a fork]. I
222 sang, "Ah! There is only a little honey, but I shall give it all to my
571 *kpara*." I came down.

439 "Ah! My Mbuti, what are you doing here?" My *kpara* looks at the basket.

"Ah! My macter. I came to search for my honey, but there is only a little of it. It is a bad year. It is heavy work. You must go back with my honey; if I get any more I shall come with it."

The *kpara* took my honey with him and returned to the village to say that he had eaten all my honey. His stupidity! [*Ndamdama nda'e!* or *Mbafu yaké!*] When he had gone I quickly climbed up above and I collected all the honey from the place I had put it, and I came down to return to the camp and share it with all my relatives. I walked, I walked, I walked. I arrived at the big river. Darkness began to come. I said, "Ha! Is night catching me in the middle of the forest like this? What shall I do?" I climbed up a big tree and lay there.

539 Halfway through the night I heard a sound and woke up. A little
222 way off I saw two firebrands. "Ah! Who is walking in the middle of
776 the night like that, with two firebrands? It is an evil spirit." I remained completely quiet. I heard a woman's voice. "Ah! My child, where is my child?" It was the voice of my grandmother, a very, very old woman. I was surprised. "Ha! Grandmother is looking for me in the middle of the night like this? Is it really my grandmother?"

"Ah! Where is my child? Either a leopard has caught him or he has lost the trail."

I remained quiet, but the two firebrands came right up underneath the tree. It was truly an evil spirit, but he had changed into my grandmother. I sneezed. "Ah! My child is up in the tree?"

"Yes, Grandmother. I am here. I was searching for honey, but darkness caught me on the trail."

"Oh, child, you have done badly, for when you did not return I thought you were dead and I left camp to search for you, and I have found you well. You have done very badly toward me. Give me my honey."

"Ah! Grandmother, it is very heavy. I shall carry it for you, I, myself. We shall return together."

"Nonsense! You are afraid of the night. You stay here. I shall return with my honey. Give it." I was afraid, because I knew it was an evil spirit. I threw some honey down. "Give me more, give me more." I threw down more. "Give me more."

*177 use of the village fear and respect for forest spirits, but it also makes
538 use of the village love for asserting their superiority and their pater-
776 nalism. It even makes use of the village concept of kinship obligations,
186 and the respect and obedience owed to a grandmother.

538 The occasion on which the legend was told was the return of
439 Cephu to the camp, after a short absence in the village, laden down
with village foods. It was known that he had gone empty-handed, and
it was equally known that he was not on good enough terms with
any of the villagers to get such a handout for nothing, that he was too
lazy to have worked for reward and too wary of pursuit to steal. How-
ever, theft seemed the only answer, so he was asked from whom he had
[57] stolen the food. Always a great dramatist, Cephu told the following
story in answer, and it quickly became a favorite.

539 "I am only a poor Mbuti; the forest is my father and my mother.
224 But my village master asked me for meat, so I hunted and I hunted
[251] and I hunted. I caught *sondu* and *lendu* and *mboloko* and *sindula*,
and I cut them all up and dried them carefully. When they were nice
and dry I wrapped the meat in fresh *mongongo* leaves and put it all
in my basket and set off for the village."

[86] This much everyone knew to be completely false, but the implied
ridicule of the villagers who would believe it was not lost.

539 "But on the way I saw a bad spirit coming toward me. I tried to
776 escape but he caught up with me and demanded the meat. I said,
'No, this is for my master. I cannot give it to you. You may take all
my own food, but not this meat—that is for my beloved master.' But
the spirit was not to be put off, and I had to fight with him. Finally
I managed to escape because I am strong, and a great hunter, and I
ran on toward the village as fast as I could. Spirits are very bad things
to fight. They would kill any villager; only we Mbuti can deal with
them. But then I saw the spirit again, and this time he was more
clever than I, and he changed into my grandmother.

"'A'i, Cephu, where are you going with all that meat?' she asked
me.

"Now, my grandmother died many years ago and I had to be polite
to her. So I told her I was taking it to my beloved master. But she got
angry and demanded it, asking if I would refuse it to her, an Mbuti,
my own grandmother, and bring it to a villager. I pleaded with her and
begged her, telling her how good my master always was to me and
how hungry he was for meat. But she snatched the basket from me,

in the Mbuti/Villager situation. The basis of the proximity and distance elements does not rest on kinship, and the relationship is as much between the two groups as it is between individuals, otherwise the situation conforms to Radcliffe-Brown's model quite clearly—viz. (1952, p. 95): "The show of hostility, the perpetual disrespect, is a continual expression of that social disjunction which is an essential part of the whole structural situation, but over which, without destroying or even weakening it, there is provided the social conjunction of friendliness and mutual aid."

In the Mbuti/Villager situation the relationship appears to be symmetrical and permissive, though both sides do occasionally take offense, the village side even sometimes taking counteraction. The ineffectiveness of taking offense or action, however, only serves to heighten the characteristic "social disjunction," and there is no doubt that beneath the display of hostility and disrespect there is cooperation, and even considerable amity. Considering the completely opposed value systems of the two worlds, this is, indeed, the only way in which the two peoples could meet and still retain a separate identity. The reasons for the meeting taking place at all, as we have already seen, are circumstantial—the historical invasion of the forest by the villagers, and their use of the Mbuti as guides; the continued parasitism of the Mbuti upon the villagers long after the original need for cooperation had gone; the contemporary mutual convenience of economic exchange; sheer territorial propinquity. These reasons do not lead automatically or easily to a structured relationship, particularly when the values of the two peoples are so divergent, so while a form of joking relationship helps to stabilize the alliance, maintaining the combination of Radcliffe-Brown's "conjunctive and disjunctive components," it is not by itself enough.

We have seen the methods by which the villagers have sought to further stabilize the situation, through a formal economic-exchange system, a fictive parallel-kinship system, and through introduction to village supernatural sanctions by establishment of magico-religious bonds through *karé* blood brotherhood and *nkumbi* initiation. Any one of these, had it worked, would have reduced the Mbuti to subordination, yet this plainly has not been done. The defense of the Mbuti has lain in their own indigenous forest system, which works not only to maintain internal cohesion but also to maintain the utmost possible structural distance from the village world while allowing a minimal amount of "mutually convenient" economic exchange.

P
121
*177
571
C
121
177
571

C
563
177
608
881
439
P
*177
•439
621

*177
578
626 the camp is filled with *akami*—not in search of *ekimi*, but in the hopes of doing as the hunters do, killing noise with more noise.

*177
583
181 5. SONG brings us to the crux of the opposition between Mbuti and villagers, for all song in villages is by definition "empty," even if sung by Mbuti, and even if, as is rarely the case, the song is strictly Mbuti in origin. That is, while in the village the Mbuti no longer have the ultimate safeguard of being able to "rejoice the forest" through song. Even if they tried, it would be *bulé*. Song being directly associated with *ekimi*, it follows, and the Mbuti affirm, that there can be no *ekimi*, or "quiet," in the village. *Ekimi*, as stated, is the ultimate goal of the Mbuti, and it is only *ekimi* that can please the forest. Visiting the village, then, would be a treacherous act beyond reconciliation under Mbuti values if it were not for the Mbuti attitude to such visits as being a form of hunt, for hunting is pleasing to the forest, and hunting is also associated with noise and danger, *akami* and *mota*. The rationalization may seem a feeble one, but to the Mbuti it is adequate and convenient.

*177
181
182
439 Thus while the more formal institutions of the band, age levels and territorial affiliation, work internally to achieve stability and externally to directly counteract village attempts to subordinate the Mbuti, so do forest values directly counter village values, maintaining the complete separation of the two peoples. The economic exchange that takes place, while undeniably mutually convenient, may also be in part a mere recognition of territorial propinquity and of mutual opposition, a mechanism for avoiding open hostility, which would otherwise be the only possible relationship.

*177
181
186 The strongly forest-oriented value system of the Mbuti, while operating toward the maintenance of internal order, completely counters the attempts of the villagers to assert their dominance by supernatural sanctions based on village values. But the answer to the question as to why the Mbuti go to the extreme of allowing themselves to be circumcised and initiated by the villagers may be more than that offered by the Mbuti hunting metaphor.

*177
181
186
224 The metaphor recalls the technique of a hunter in taking on the appearance (and smell) of his quarry, of rubbing himself with a paste made of the heart and brains and eyes of the animal so that he can feel and think and see like his quarry. It is not a technique widely practiced, though it is practiced by elephant hunters, and by some archers, and by elders who are out hunting on their own. It is more

[P.303]

THE LEGEND OF DOUBLE TRICKERY

539
222
439.

me ke nandura ka ba boki.

I went to the forest to collect honey.

me ke d'i, me ke d'i, me ke d'i.

I went, I went, I went.

me ke akurahwa, ku pia libo mangbo.

I went very far, beyond the big river.

moki li suanjoki. me oni neko kuma boki.

I heard the sound of bees. I saw up high the place of honey.

me lufudo, "toka bo nangoli; nde mendamo; nde boki ndamo."

I said, "Nobody has enclosed the tree with vine, it is mine; it is my honey."

me poki loka phelea, phelea bekbekbe'i.

I sharpened my ax, very sharp indeed.

me teningoli. ke kongi isa, me pisi isa subaso.

I cut a vine. I fanned my fire, and put the fire in my basket.

me pedi oda phangoli; me daphi, me daphi.

I began to climb; I climbed, I climbed.

boki neko kurahwa. nde boki, boki sandenengo, kanga piso.

The honey was very far. It was honey, real honey, not *apuma*.

me kidi. me boingoli, me liki. me pisi isa suba eboso.

I reached it. I fastened the vine, I sat. I put fire into the hole.

me lophi. me ki abi bekbekbe'i, me che'i banzoki.

I blew. I got much smoke, I drove out many bees.

me ko iti, me ko iti, me ko iti.

I chopped, I chopped, I chopped.

me ko iti, me mua kito, a mua pika na dodo.

While I was chopping I heard someone walking below.

"nu andea a mua pika pecha me?" nde mukpara ndamo.

"Who is walking below me?" It is my master.

304

WAYWARD SERVANTS

539

"a oki kueta mboki ndamo, a me beli." me wanzi nimbo.

222

"He heard me cutting my honey, he followed me." I began to sing.

439

me nimbi bekbekbei, akini melufu. kanga me oki.

I sang loudly, but he called me. I did not hear.

me nimbi, akini me kweti.

I sang, but I chopped.

me nimbi, "Ha! me kweti boki. me ko oka kapa'i akpara mamu."

I sang, "Ha! I am chopping honey to give to my kpara."

me kweti bisa, me kweti boka. boki a bi lenga'i.

I chopped slowly, I chopped honey. There was much honey.

akini me pisa depa subaso.

But I only put part of it in my basket.

me pisi ndetina a su soro kokomea.

The rest I put where the tree had two arms.

me nimbi, "Ah! boki a bi depa, me ka bokbu akpara mamu." me ki a dodo.

I sang, "Ah! There is only a little honey, I shall give it all to my kpara." I came down.

"Ah! mambuti mamu, me siye ema?" mubira a si pi so.

"Ah! My Mbuti, what are you doing here?" The MuBira looks at the basket.

"Ah! akpara mamu, me piki ka ba boki ndamo, akini me pati na che.

"Ah! My Master, I came to search for my honey, but I got only a little.

"me mua ka pa'i bokbu. me sia bo'u."

"I am going to give it all. I will stay empty."

"ue nde mambuti manza. me ka pa eboko mboye siki nanji."

"You are a good Mbuti. I shall give you bananas when you come to the village."

"Ah! akpara mamu, me lika nandura a ka ba boki, akini nde depa."

"Ah! My Master, I shall stay in the forest to search for honey, but there is little."

"nde mwaka sinana. nde kazi ndangbo."

"It is a bad year. It is hard work."

"ue sikia nanji na boki ndamo. me pati ndetina, me piki na'u."

"You go to the village with my honey. If I get more, I shall come with it."

akpara a bu boki ndamo, a siki nanji nda'e.

The kpara took my honey, he went to the village with it.

asibande a bi boki ndamo bokbu. ndandama nda'e!

He would say he had eaten all my honey. His stupidity!

THE LEGEND OF DOUBLE TRICKERY

305

ake me daphi umand'o, me bu boki ngbokbu, kumande me pisibi.

I quickly climbed up again, I took all the honey from the place where I had put it.

539
222
439 .

me simi ya dodo a sia n'apa a kapa banama bame.

I came down to return to the camp and shared it with everyone.

me tambi, me tambi, me tambi. me kidi apua libo mangbo.

I walked, I walked, I walked, I arrived at the big river.

tokwaba a wanzi pika. me lufu. "ha! tudu a me pedi a me mandula? me sao mabo?"

Darkness began to settle. I said, "Ha! Is night catching me in the middle of the forest like this? What shall I do?"

me daphi kua me mangbo, me langi neko.

I climbed up into a big tree, I lay there.

ane mangondo moki liso. me oni kurahwa isa ebaré.

Halfway through the night I heard a sound and woke. I saw far away two firebrands.

539
776

"mondea na tamba kifa, na isa ebara bende? nde ketiba!"

"Who is walking in the middle of the night, with two firebrands? It is an evil spirit!"

me kobi nengo. m'oki liso kali.

I remained completely quiet. I heard a woman's voice.

"a miki mamu, miki mamu; miki mamu mu ma?" liso a tata, mozee nengo.

"Ah! My child, my child; where is my child?" It was the voice of my grandmother, a very old person.

me moboki nengo. "Ah! tatamua kaba me amemangondo? nde tata mamu nengo?"

I was very afraid. "Ah! My grandmother is looking for me in the middle of the night like this? Is it really my grandmother?"

"ah miki mamu mu ma? au moli a pedi, au a bungi?"

"Ah! Where is my child? Either a leopard has caught him or he has lost his way?"

me kobi nengo, akini isa ebaré akidi tina me.

I kept quiet completely, but the two firebrands came right up underneath the tree.

nde keti nengo, akini akeoki tatamamu.

It was truly an evil spirit, but it had turned into my grandmother.

Congo-Kinshasa FO1

TABLE 3a

FOREST/VILLAGE EXCHANGE

To illustrate the major areas in which an exchange of goods or services does or could take place.

The Village

Forest Produce

Village Produce

SHELTER: Phrynium leaves, small saplings, firewood.

House poles; large saplings; leaves; mud for walls; wood for doors, furniture, etc.; clothing.

FOOD: Meat, rarely nuts and honey.

Bananas, manioc, peanuts, rice, corn, beans, palm oil, dried fish (trade).

LABOR: Partial hut-building, guarding plantations, carrying goods to market, drawing water, entertainment.

All major building, furniture-making, marketing, plantation work, clearing, canoe-building, fishing, road work.

SKILLS: Effective medicines.

Pottery, metalwork, toolmaking, divination, ritual specialization (circumcision).

The Forest

SHELTER: Phrynium leaves, saplings, firewood, clothing, furniture.

Nil

FOOD: Meat, mushrooms, fruits, nuts, berries, roots, honey.

Bananas, manioc, corn, beans, palm oil, rice (with relevant utensils).

LABOR: Hut-building, bark-cloth-making, hunting, gathering.

Nil

SKILLS: Effective medicine, manufacture of hunting equipment, dance and song.

Metalwork (metal tips for arrows and spears, blades for knives and axes).

P
*177
• 439
433
C
177
439
433

TABLE 3b

ACTUAL EXCHANGE BETWEEN VILLAGE FAMILY AND
 MBUTI FAMILY DURING FIVE-DAY VISIT OF LATTER TO
 EPULU VILLAGE

Brought for villagers:

One *mboloko* antelope (enough for two adults for one meal)
 Two loads of leaves (enough for $\frac{1}{2}$ roof, or for one over-all temporary
 repair)

Work done for villagers:

Woman:

husks rice: four hours
 watches over cooking: twelve hours
 helps fetch water: two hours
 carries one load of bananas to
 market: three hours
 takes part in two dances: two
 evenings

Man:

fetches one load of firewood: four
 hours
 helps re-leaf roof: three hours
 takes part in two dances: two
 evenings

Two children: watch plantation for three mornings

Obtained during stay from the villagers:

Village food for four, or five, days	1 ax blade
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ packets of cigarettes	1 bottle of beer
1 bottle of palm oil	1 shirt
1 musical instrument (<i>lukembi</i>)	1 bar of soap
2 arrow points	

Taken back to forest after five days:

1 stem of bananas (enough for the family for fourteen meals)	peanuts (enough for one meal)
manioc (enough for four meals)	$\frac{1}{2}$ bottle palm oil
beans (enough for two meals)	1 bar soap
corn (enough for three meals)	1 handful of salt
	1 handful loose tobacco

P
177*
439
C
177
439

P
461
177*

P
177*
439
C
177
439

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

334

WAYWARD SERVANTS

Plan Ib EPULU VILLAGE

Camp of Pygmies
(About twice scale of
Plan Ia)

CLAN MEMBERSHIP (Numbers inside huts)

1A	PUEMI	1
1B	PUEMI	2
2	BOMASUA	
3A	BOKELE	1
3B	BOKELE	2
3C	BOKELE	3
4	SAMBAKA	
5	SWANGO	
6	UNGBAUSU	
7	MEKI	
8	POKBAYA	
9	POKAMA	
10	POTEBE	
11	NGAMO	
12	BANDOWA	

Letters inside huts
indicate barter-relationship
with correspondingly lettered
hut in village (Plan Ia).

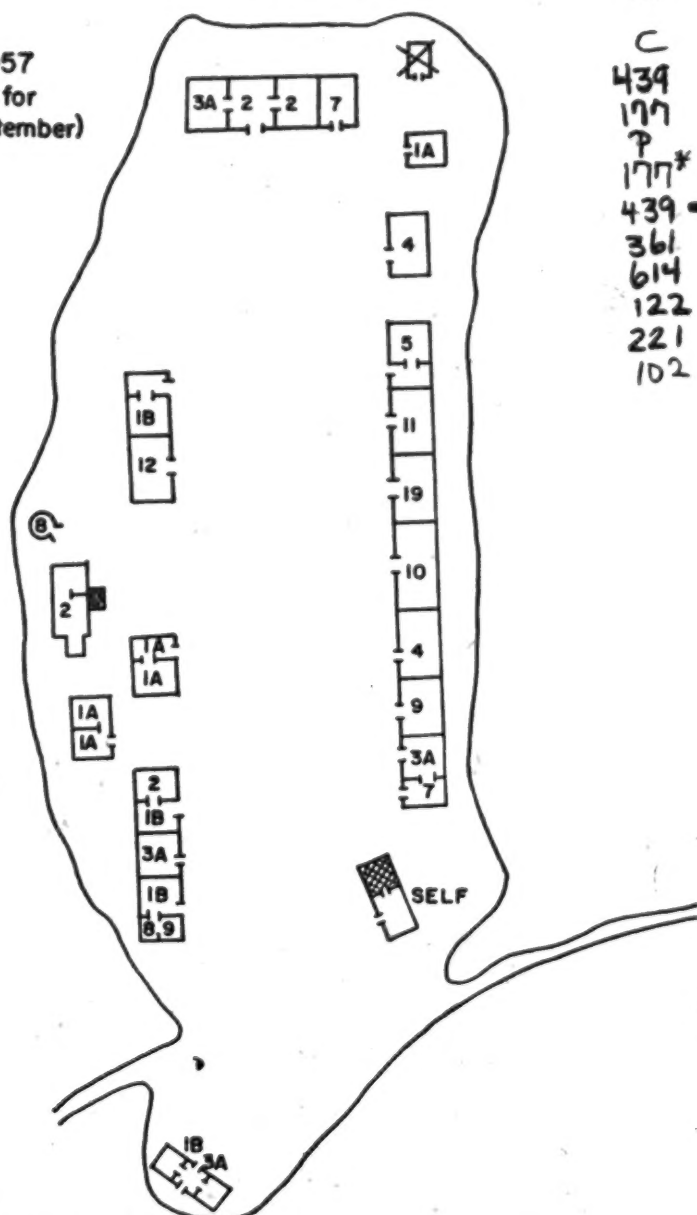


2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 PO4 Pygmies PO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa PO1

MAPS, TABLES AND PLANS

335

Plan 2a
OCTOBER 1957
(See Plan 1B for
August-September)



PLAN 2a-d Village camp of Epulu Mbuti, October 1957-March 1958.

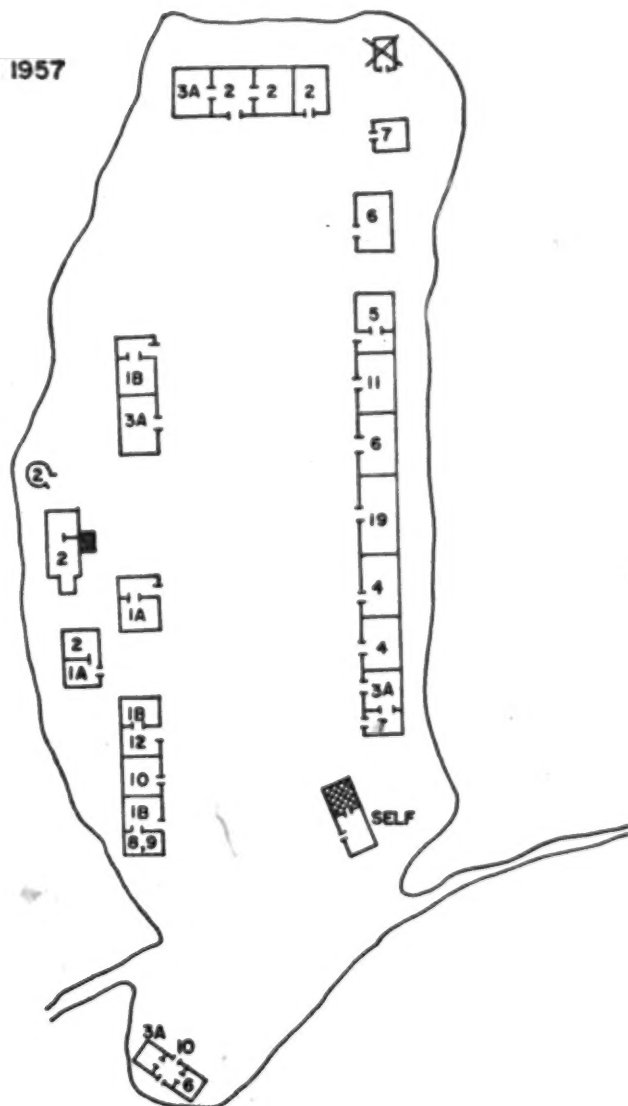
2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 PO4 Pygmies PO4
 Mbuti
 Congo-Kinshasa PO1

336

WAYWARD SERVANTS

Plan 2 b
 DECEMBER 1957

C
 439
 177
 P
 177
 • 439
 361
 614
 122
 221
 102

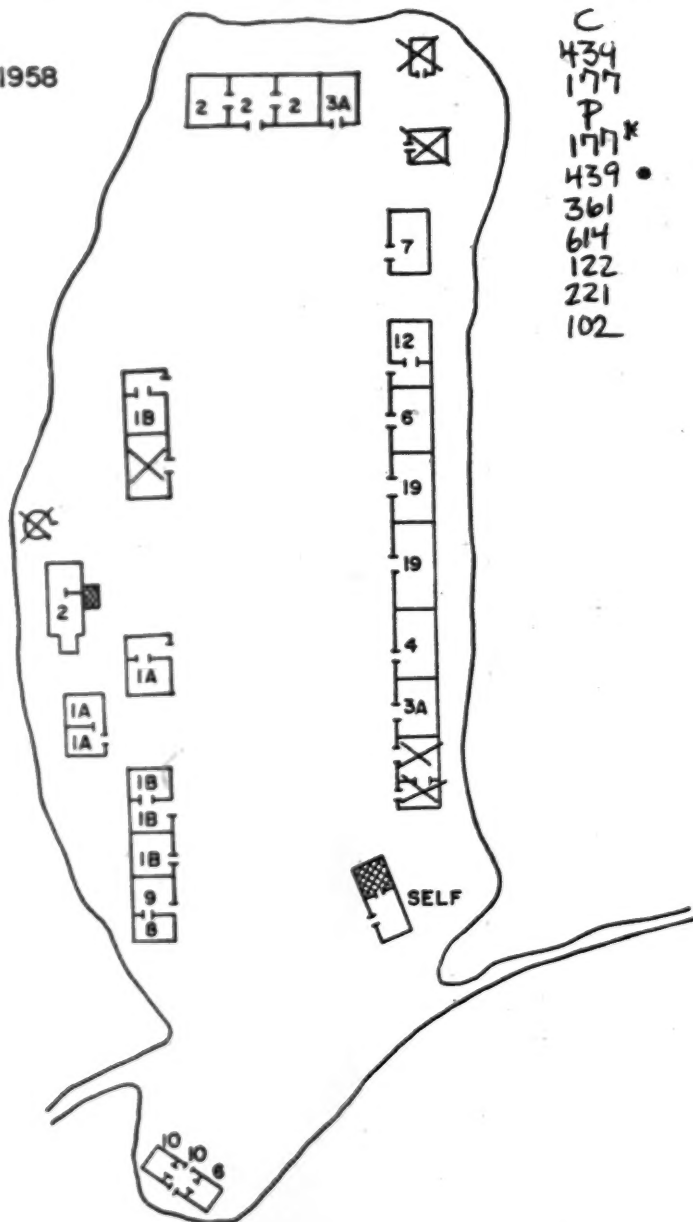


2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
 Mbuti
 Congo-Kinshasa FO1

MAPS, TABLES AND PLANS

337

Plan 2c
 FEBRUARY 1958



C
 434
 177
 P
 177*
 439 •
 361
 614
 122
 221
 102

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
 Mbuti
 Congo-Kinshasa FO1

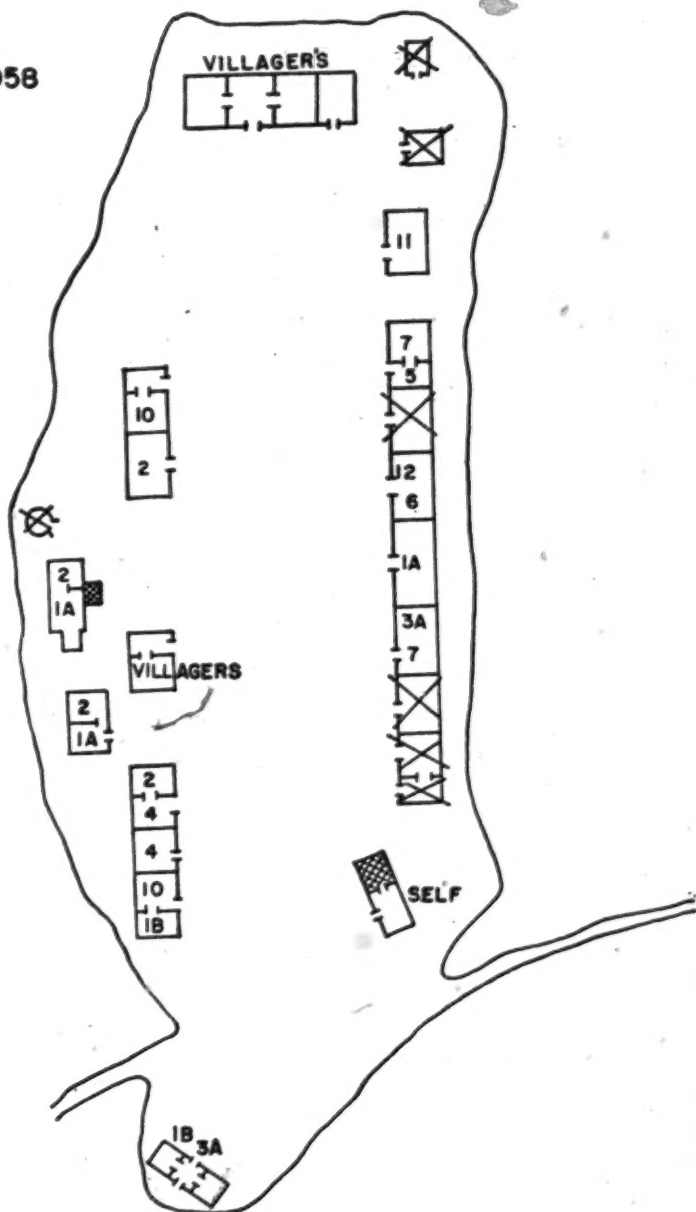
338

WAYWARD SERVANTS

Plan 2d

MARCH 1958

C
 439
 177
 P
 177
 * 439
 361
 614
 122
 221
 102



685

735

• 439

Pygmies FO4

Mbuti

[Information on begging and stealing of food from villages, since the practice is not regarded as a crime or symptom of Pygmy indigence but something the villagers simply tolerate, will be found under 177]

THE FOREST PEOPLE

512 go between the camp and the hunt, if they are not too far apart,
224 bringing news to and fro.
[202]

As soon as the hunters return they deposit the meat on the ground, and the camp gathers to make sure the division is fair. Nobody acknowledges that it is, but in the end everyone is satisfied. Cooking operations start at once and within an hour everyone is eating. If the hunt has been a good one, and the day is still young, the most energetic men and women dance immediately afterward, followed by the children. In the course of such a dance they imitate, with suitable exaggeration, the events of the day. If the hunt has not been so good, or a man is tired and does not feel like dancing, he will sit down and gather his family around him and tell them something that has happened to him on the hunt, something wonderful and exciting, but which naturally happened while nobody else was looking.

538 Since Pygmies are blessed with a lively imagination, these stories
[157] grow until it is difficult to tell the difference between what is meant to be a straight, factual account and a traditional legend. And there is always the element of the two-way process in which fact becomes legend, and legend becomes accepted, through constant repetition, as fact.

The dream world of the Pygmies is a very real one, full of hidden meaning and significance. There is one story that Cephu is still fond of telling, and he still tells it in almost exactly the same way as he did six years earlier when I first heard it.

538 He had been into the village for a short visit, and we all knew he
• 439 had gone empty-handed. Yet when he returned a few days later he
199 brought a sizable load of plantains and rice with him. Everyone asked him who he had stolen it from. Cephu, with a great smile spreading across his face, sat down and waited for his audience to settle down. With his wife and his children close behind him, and his friends all around, Cephu sat simply on the ground in his most charming and bewitching way, old rascal that he was, even then. He looked up

THE PLAY WORLD OF THE BAMBUTI

at the trees and opened his arms and raised his expressive hands⁵³⁸ upward. He began telling the story in his beautiful rich voice, the⁴³⁹ seriousness of what he was saying belied only by the smile that lurked¹⁷⁷ in the depths of his shining brown eyes.

"I am only a poor BaMbuti; the forest is my father and my mother. But my Negro master had asked me to bring him some meat." So Cephu started, self-deprecating, using the term for his patron in the sense in which only the Negroes use it, as indicating ownership. The Pygmies accept this assumption of superiority outwardly, because it pays—as the story went on to show.

"My master asked me for meat, so I hunted and I hunted and^[224] I hunted, and I caught sondu and lendu and mboloko and sindula,^[251] and I cut them all up and dried them carefully. When they were nice and dry I wrapped the meat in fresh mongongo leaves and put it all in my basket and set off for the village. But on the way I saw⁵³⁸ a bad spirit coming toward me. I tried to escape but he caught up⁴³⁹ with me and demanded the meat. I said, 'No, this is for my master.¹⁷⁷ I cannot give it to you. You may take all my own food, but not this meat—that is for my beloved master.' But the spirit was not to be put off, and I had to fight with him. Finally I managed to escape, because I am strong and a great hunter, and I ran on toward the village as fast as I could. Spirits are very bad things to fight. They^[186] would kill any villager; only we Pygmies can deal with them. But then I saw the spirit again and this time he was more clever than I, and he changed into my grandmother. 'A'i, Cephu! Where are you going with all that meat?' she asked me. Now my grandmother died^[769] many years ago and I had to be polite to her. So I told her I was taking it to my beloved master. But she got angry and demanded it, asking if I would refuse it to her, a Pygmy, my own grandmother, and bring it to a villager? I pleaded with her and begged her, telling her how good my master always was to me, and how hungry he was for meat. But she snatched the basket from me, and because she was my

THE FOREST PEOPLE

538 grandmother I could not strike her or stop her, and she ran off down
439 the trail.
177

"As she was running she changed into a spirit again so that she could run faster, and as soon as my grandmother was a spirit once more I could fight, so I fought and fought, and the spirit nearly killed me, and he went off in the manner of spirits and left me with nothing, not even my basket.

"When I came to the village I was crying because I had nothing to offer my master, and when my master asked me what was wrong I told him this story. He was terribly sorry because he knows what dreadful lives we BaMbuti lead, surrounded by all these bad spirits.

[186] He said if it was not for the spirits he would come into the forest and hunt himself, but everyone knows how dangerous the spirits are to villagers. Then I asked him if I could have some rice as I had lost all my own food as well as his. He said, 'Of course, my poor Pygmy, you have tried to help your master, and you can't help it if you are just a Pygmy and have to live among all those dreadful spirits.'

"So he gave me rice and plantains and I came away happy. How kind the villagers are to their poor Pygmies!"

[186] Every time Cephu tells this story it brings knowing smiles to the faces of all who listen, because every "poor Pygmy" has some trick such as Cephu's, by which he twists his "master" around his little finger and at the same time heightens the fear of the villagers for the forest by constantly repeating stories of imaginary spirits and dread dangers.

538 This story, as often happened, set off another. Old Asofalinda,
177 Ekianga's sister, was not to be outdone. She described how she had cut down a fine stalk of plantains outside the village but was surprised in the act by the owner. She just had time to push the plantains into a hole in the ground at the foot of the tree. The villager asked what she was doing there, and what she was putting in the

[176] hole. "Oh, master," she replied, "there was a dreadful dangerous

THE FOREST PEOPLE

P
123
177 women gathered around, chattering away gaily and asking for news
521 of the village.

C
648
439 The girls were Amina, daughter of an important BaBira subchief,
177 and her cousin. Her father was hoping, she said, that she might be
P
123 allowed to stay for a few days and bring him back some meat. She
177 obviously knew the Pygmies well, because without waiting to be
asked she distributed the plantains. She said she would keep the
• 439 manioc flour until the meat began to come in. Apparently she was
well liked, because as soon as people heard of her presence they came
P
123 over to shake her hand, in the manner of villagers, grasping each
177 other's wrists. Kenge told me all about her, and said that her father

C
832 was one of the least animal-like villagers. He asked me which of the
[576] two girls I thought looked the more attractive. I said Amina, with-
out a doubt. She was the most beautiful girl I had seen in a long
time; the BaBira are by no means noted for their good looks. Amina
was tall and a warm brown in color. She carried herself with the
inborn grace of Bantu women; her eyes were deep and thoughtful;
her expression was kind and gentle. Yes, she was certainly the more
beautiful of the two. Kenge nodded thoughtfully and changed the
conversation.

P
123
[513] That night I sat up late with the men, and when I went back to
[372] my hut I was surprised not to see any bachelors sleeping on the floor
as they usually did. But three logs were placed beside the bed and
were glowing cheerfully. I sat down on the edge of the bed and
found, as I had expected, that Kenge had curled up in my blanket.
He was considerate enough, on such occasions, not to take my
blanket onto the floor, but rather to take half of the bed. So I crawled
in beside him and was about to say something when I realized that
the body beside me was considerably taller than Kenge, and very
differently shaped. It was Amina.

P
123
177
648
C
648
123 It was a difficult moment, but I could see the whole situation at
once. I had become the center of a nice political maneuver. The

MOLIMO: THE DANCE OF DEATH

The evening meal was a good one, as the Pygmies had brought in far more meat than they allowed to the villagers, and in return for what they had given away they had received generous portions of rice, beans, groundnuts and manioc, and a few of the tiny bitter tomatoes which blend so well with manioc leaves and groundnuts in the making of a sauce. When it was dark, the women and children retired almost immediately, and the men gathered at the central fire where four upright poles indicated the Pygmy version of a *baraza*, or men's meeting place. At first, several villagers came to see what was going on, and the Pygmies sang and danced for them. They sang and danced until the villagers, tired after a heavy day's work in the plantations, went to bed. Then the men really began to sing. They sang and sang until it seemed almost as though we were back in the forest. But any time there was a strange sound, and it was suspected that there might be a villager lurking about, they stopped. They had guards posted all around to make sure they were not caught unawares.

It must have been about three o'clock in the morning when the molimo made its appearance. It came into the camp preceded by two youths holding glowing firebrands in their hands. Waving the brands high in the air, then swinging them down to touch the ground, they laid a fiery path for the molimo to follow. It was stately and imposing. Following this path of glowing cinders the molimo circled the village several times and then came to rest by the fire, where it sang very quietly. Just as I wondered if it was really going to sing as it did in the forest it moved off, and the tempo increased. Surrounded now by all the youths, the molimo started running around, faster and faster, making lightning swoops on the group of older men who were sitting by the fire. The rest of the men were either dancing in a frenzy around the fire itself, as if protecting it, or else they were with the molimo. I heard a crunching sound as the molimo plowed through a small field of sugar cane at the edge of the vil-

THE FOREST PEOPLE

36 | this area. It was named Eboyo, and the villagers belonged to the
[103] BaBira tribe, predominant in the southern and central Ituri. Here
[101] there were two chiefs—the traditional chief, Sabani, and the govern-
621 ment-appointed chief, Kapamba. Kapamba's job was to see that the
622 right crops were planted, harvested, and marketed to the Belgian
648 government, and that the taxes were collected and paid over. The
439 Belgian policy was largely to let the people in this rather difficult
and unprofitable part of the Congo live as they had always lived.
The only stipulations were that they should live peacefully, and that
in addition to their own small plantations they should cultivate more
ground for crops which would both help to feed immigrant labor
forces, such as the road gangs and the workers at Station de Chasse,
and be of commercial value to the Belgians in the world market for
such products as cotton, palm oil and groundnuts.

622 Kapamba was not a popular figure. He was small and pathetically
554 ugly. His hut was at the very far end of the village, behind a large
hillock on the top of which stood his baraza. Only his close relatives
and a few Pygmies lived near him.

In the village proper, Sabani's house was in the center. Sabani
was a sly old man whose father had married a Lese girl, from the
[648] eastern edge of the forest. Sabani changed his tribal affiliation to suit
the convenience of the moment, and the Belgians found it impos-
sible to deal with him, so they appointed Kapamba in his place. But
Sabani was still the real power in the village, and the real authority.
He was also the chief ritual authority for miles around, and he was
a frightening sight when painted and dressed for his role of witch
doctor at the time of the nkumbi initiation ceremony. Even on
622 other occasions when he wished to be formal—such as the visit of a
554 Belgian administrator—he was no less inspiring. Ragged trousers
291 came down to within a few inches of feet that were barely covered by
[648] ill-fitting shoes, slit where they pinched so as to be more comfortable.
An old khaki tunic covered his bare chest, and on his head he wore

THE FOREST PEOPLE

P
177
571
C
177
571
322
556
the first to help in time of need; as a result he was one of the few villagers who was never short of meat, with plenty of leaves for the roof of his house, and invariably with a crowd of good-humored, well-fed Pygmies sitting around in his baraza, waiting to do him some small favor.

C
177
563
P
177
E
[574]
P
C
[464]
Masisi, like Njobo and many of the others, had for a long time been attached to a noble of the BaBira tribe, Ngoma, uncle of my erstwhile would-be wife, Amina. But Ngoma was wealthy and had many other Pygmies so he did not resent the defection of a number of them to Camp Putnam. In fact he frequently came to visit them, or sent messages to find out how they were; and when they were near his home, some distance away, they were presented with stalks of plantains and baskets of groundnuts and manioc. Whenever work on Ngoma's plantation was behind schedule he could be sure of willing help that would avert the penalty of a heavy fine or confiscation.

P
177
571
439
C
177
571
439
622
P
[574]
Manyalibo, however, was attached to Kapamba, the government chief at Eboyo. For all his clowning, Manyalibo was crafty, and he played Kapamba for what he could get. Eboyo had some of the best plantains in the region, and it was much closer than Ngoma's village. Manyalibo seldom went there himself, and he refused all calls by Kapamba to come and help in the plantation. Sometimes he sent one of his daughters, or his adopted son Madyadya, to help the chief and to maintain some semblance of a bargain, but they never stayed for long. Once, when we were at Apa Lelo, Kapamba was in such dire need of help that he came out to the hunting camp himself. Manyalibo received him courteously enough, and housed him for a few days, but firmly refused to return to the village with him or to allow any of his family to return. Kapamba alternately flew into tantrums and attempted to bribe Manyalibo with stories of the abundance of rice and plantains waiting for him at the village. Finally Manyalibo agreed to let his wife go, and he sent her off carrying a

THE WORLD OF THE VILLAGE

basket with two legs of antelope as a gift for Kapamba's wife. The camp watched the chief leave with few regrets. They had only allowed him to stay because he had brought a quantity of food with him.

Manyalibo's wife returned two days later with her basket full to overflowing with delicacies from the village. She had told Kapamba that she did not want to stay longer without her husband, so he had no option but to allow her to return.

Manyalibo's son-in-law, Ausu, was even more of a renegade. His "hereditary master" was André, the chief of a powerful Islamic village just beyond Eboyo. André's father, old Effundi Somali, had been a child when Stanley brought his relief expedition through the forest to rescue Emin Pasha. He used to tell stories of the dreadful wars that were fought in those days, and of the trail of destruction that Stanley had left behind him. While the old man was alive André had worked as head cook at Camp Putnam, but now he was chief in his father's place.

Part Bira and part Ngwana, André inherited all the traits of the latter. In his dealings with Europeans he could be charming and helpful; he could also be cunning and crooked. With other villagers he was proud and avaricious, and he had a supreme contempt— which he could disguise whenever it suited him—for the Pygmies.

A few years earlier, when Ausu had been hunting forest pig, a boar had charged him and wounded him badly, ripping his stomach and one leg. André had taken Ausu into his own house and cared for him, nursing him for months until he was well again. This was done under the guise of friendship, and I have heard André tell the story many times to illustrate how enlightened he is. But I have also heard Ausu's comment that André had done no more for him than he would have done for a valuable hunting dog. A Pygmy is not unresponsive to genuine kindness, and Ausu would not have left André soon after recovering if there had been any such kindness in the act. But he left and refused to return under any circumstances.

THE FOREST PEOPLE

000 the act. But he left and refused to return under any circumstances.

C
563 A few years later I was with Ausu in the forest when we were
P
177 returning from a hunt. We were up above the Lelo River, where the
• 439 forest was clear of all undergrowth. Ausu saw something move
[36] among a heap of leaves, and we found a baby okapi lying there. The
P
[482] mother okapis leave their young, covering them with leaves, when
they go in search of food. Knowing that the Station de Chasse was
anxious to have a small live okapi, Ausu picked this one up and
brought it back to camp. We took turns in carrying it over our shoulders, as although it was only a few days old it was both heavy and frisky.

We eventually got it safely to the Station de Chasse, and anticipating some kind of trouble I asked the director to arrange to pay the reward directly to Ausu. Five hundred francs was the standard sum offered for a live okapi, but only if it survived for a week. We returned to the forest, and Ausu regaled the camp with stories of what he was going to do with the money, the equivalent of about ten dollars. Manyalibo asked him if he was going to give any to André. The suggestion raised a storm of protest; André was universally disliked by the Pygmies. But Ausu said that he would give him some, and eventually it was decided to give the chief two hundred francs out of the five hundred.

P
C
[686] The very next day a delegation arrived from André's village with a letter from André to me. It said that he had heard Ausu was to be paid five hundred francs, and would I see that it was all paid over to him as Ausu was his Pygmy and had refused to work for him for several years. I sent back a reply saying that the Station de Chasse made their payments direct to the person who caught the animal, and that Ausu had offered to pay André two hundred francs. For the next few days we had a series of notes and delegations, pleading, C
[694] cajoling and threatening. Finally André said that if Ausu did not give him all the money, he was going to bring a charge of theft

THE WORLD OF THE VILLAGE

against him and have him put in jail. As the tribunals are all Negro, with no Pygmy members, even the most obviously distorted charge against a Pygmy is bound to succeed.

Ausu decided that if this was André's attitude he was not going to give him a single franc. On the day of the payment I went with him to the Station de Chasse, saw him get the five hundred francs, and joined the director in advising him to climb over the fence and return through the forest rather than to leave by the main gate. And sure enough, as I left, there was André with half a dozen of his men, waiting. When he saw he had been tricked he went to the paramount chief of the area and had a court order made out for Ausu's immediate arrest and confinement to prison. But Ausu was already back in the forest, and in time even court orders are forgotten. And so with all his show of authority and superiority André was unable to do anything; trying to pursue a Pygmy in the forest was a task no villager would undertake for any amount of pay.

There are those, like André, who really believe that the Pygmies are inferior and are meant to be treated like slaves, but for the most part the villagers are much more sensible and realistic. If they want to have control over their Pygmies, they know it must be based on something other than threats of physical force. But even the most benevolent of them regard the Pygmies much as the Pygmies regard them in turn—as a kind of convenience. I know of only one villager who was almost accepted by the pygmies as one of themselves. That was Kaweki, the fisherman.

Kaweki was a not-so-young bachelor of the BaBira tribe. He claimed to dislike women, saying they made far too much noise and cost far too much money. Most of the time he was in the forest, catching fish in dams and traps, drying them, and sending them down to market with his Pygmy friends. This struck the other villagers as an undignified, not to say an unsafe, procedure. But Kaweki was not one to care about what others thought.

THE FOREST PEOPLE

593 He then went up to his mother and greeted her, which he had not done since she entered the camp. She put her arms around him, and it was strange to see the proud, sophisticated and very adult Kenge allowing himself to be embraced with such a show of affection. But what Badorinji had said was true—he was a good son. And he was a good brother too, for when Badorinji had finished hugging him, doing a little dance at the same time, he took the weeping Yambabo's hand and led her to the hut opposite mine, and there he put his arm around her and whispered something in her ear and he sent her inside to lie down and sleep.

584 Taphu sent word back that Yambabo would have to hurry as he was off to the forest and would not be back for a long time. Maliamo also sent a message, to say that the villagers would not let her come until Yambabo had married Taphu, because they did not trust

584 Yambabo. The villagers announced their opinion that Kenge had already slept with Maliamo so much that it would not hurt him to

177
[836] wait. Kenge was furious, because this meant that he would have to go through a village wedding, unless he wanted to alienate the vil-

[571] lagers by ignoring them. This would have meant losing good ex-

• [429] change-friends who kept him supplied with village goods in return

[186] for a few favors in the forest. Kenge enjoyed all the fun and games

of a village wedding when someone else was involved, and he was content for Yambabo to go through the ceremony, but for himself

he wanted no part of stupid village customs. He was going to carry

584 Maliamo away and give her parents an antelope, or maybe an ele-

[523] phant, like any self-respecting Pygmy. He began dreaming out

loud, describing exactly how he was going to track the elephant,

and maybe kill a buffalo or two on the way, and he only came back

to earth when I asked him how he was going to bring the elephant

back to the village. He said that I would see; he was going to Ma-

liamo right now. He set off at once. The next day he returned alone.

Maliamo had gone into hiding, not wanting to jeopardize her broth-

VILLAGE INITIATION AND MAGIC

nobody there. He struggled and wrestled but could not escape, and eventually he was thrown onto the ground. He suffered violent dysentery from that time on. But in spite of this illness, Aberi was still strong and healthy enough to be one of the most energetic, if not one of the most successful hunters. And so when he fell ill during a visit to the village, some time after the elima had ended, nobody thought much about it—except Aberi. He claimed that he had been bewitched, and he knew why. He said that many months ago he and two other Pygmies had promised a villager from the BaNgwana village of Dar es Salaam that they would give him a lot of meat if he let them have a sack of rice. The villager, unwisely, gave them the rice but never got the meat. After several attempts to get his due he cursed all three with a powerful curse, and it was this curse, Aberi said, that was killing him. This villager not only possessed the witchcraft substance, but he knew it and used it deliberately. He was a sorcerer. Nobody believed Aberi, however, and slowly he got better.

One evening I met him wandering up the path leading from Cephu's tiny camp to our own, and I asked him how he was, saying that it was good to see him walking again. He often wore a dismal, dejected look, but this time his face was completely empty of any expression whatsoever. It was frightening to see a face normally full of one emotion or another so void. Even his ugliness had deserted him, and in its place there was just nothing. Aberi said, slowly and carefully, that his body was better but he was going to die because he had been cursed, and for that there was no cure. He spent a short while in our camp, and we all tried to cheer him up. He seemed to brighten after a little singing, and when he left us he was almost cheerful.

Early in the morning, while it was still dark, I was awakened by an outburst of the most terrible wailing and crying, and I knew what it meant without asking the ash-gray Kenge, who came pounding at my door. I went outside, and in the dim light I saw Pygmies all over

THE FOREST PEOPLE

P
114 I asked Kenge if he would like to come with me and was not surprised when he packed off Maliamo to stay with his mother. Nothing would have stopped Kenge from making our projected tour of the forest. We decided to circle the area by following the road around the fringes, stopping wherever it seemed expedient and setting off by foot. I took a supply of notebooks and pencils, a typewriter, and a couple of changes of clothes. Kenge not only brought two changes of clothes, specially purchased at the local stores for the occasion, but also a huge old charcoal-heated flatiron. He said that we would probably be going through large cities and meeting big people, and he wanted to show them that we were not savages.

P
[122]
P
[186] Our first stop was the headquarters of the BaNdaka chief, at the village of Bafwakoa. It was a comfortable day's drive, and we arrived late in the afternoon, having stopped at almost every village on the way. The news of our coming had gone before us, in the strange way that news travels in Africa, from village to village. When we reached Bafwakoa, Chief Kachui was sitting out on his veranda waiting to greet us, surrounded by his official advisers and some of his family.

C
522 Kachui was an old man, and a leper, and he knew enough of
563 Europeans not to offer to shake hands with strangers. But we had
P met several times before, and he clasped both my hands warmly in
115 his and made me sit down beside him. I introduced Kenge as a friend,
123 and with great aplomb the powerful old man called for another chair to be brought. This was the first time, I am sure, that such an honor had been done a Pygmy by this severe and conventional chief. We talked a long while. I made it quite plain that he could talk freely in front of Kenge, and he did so. He said that he "owned" several hundred Pygmies, and they were really more trouble than they were worth. "Here it is, time for the cotton crop to be brought in, and
P still I can not get the Pygmies to come back from the forest. They
• [439] say the hunting is too good, but if it is, then why do I get no meat?

THE FOREST PEOPLE

^C
563 We did meet some Pygmies, however, and they laughed and told
P us that no Pygmy would ever come near Isiaka; there were plenty
177 of other villagers who gave them much more in return for their
184 meat, while Isiaka always expected them to work on his plantations
for nothing. This, in fact, was the picture we got wherever we
stopped. The villagers throughout the forest complained bitterly
^C
186 about the Pygmies, saying, "They eat us up until we are ready to
die"—meaning that the Pygmies take from them but give little in
return.

P
C
177 It was not until we reached the western limits of the forest and
439 turned north that we really had any luck. Some miles east of Wamba
C we left the car and followed a track through the forest. At the end
829 of a full day we arrived at a series of old established villages of the
Mabudo tribe. These people had a much more realistic attitude
toward the Pygmies and consequently got along much better with
them. They talked freely and willingly. They said that, after all,
the Pygmies had been in the forest long before the Mabudo arrived,
so they had the right to live as they wished. If they preferred to stay
in the forest and live like animals, that was their concern, but if they
wanted to come to the villages and work for the Mabudo, that was
fine. At the time of harvest the villagers all gave gifts of the first
fruits to the local Pygmies, because, as they said, it was their land.
And any time the Pygmies were near a Mabudo village they in-
variably brought in gifts of meat or honey.

P
123 There were a few Pygmies in one of the villages when we arrived,
and after a couple of days they agreed to take us out to one of the
hunting camps. Kenge had done some talking to them on the side,
assuring them that I was not really like a villager, but just like them,
a "miki nde ndura"—son of the forest. When he introduced me to
them he proudly pointed to the marks on my forehead that pro-
claimed me an adult. "The villagers call him Mulefu, because he is

15

The Dream World

OUR RETURN TO EPULU found most of the Pygmies, except for 361 Cephu and his group, down in the village. Hunting had been excep- [439] tionally good and over the past weeks they had dried a quantity of meat which they were now busy trading for village produce. Their roadside village camp had long been abandoned, and only my house there was still standing. They all seemed to have agreed that they [342] did not want any more mud houses, and they had made a temporary camp just inside the forest. It was not far from one of the plantations, and close to a stream of crystal water.

Kenge had a hero's welcome; even the villagers came to visit the

THE FOREST PEOPLE

²²²gathered, but the forest gives its people honey only during two happy
²⁶²months. It gives with even greater abundance, however, and the
honey season is a season for abandoned merry-making, when even
the cares of hunting become unimportant, as each individual, young
or old, male or female, sets off every morning in quest of this precious
gift. Above all, it is a season for rejoicing, for dancing and singing.

²²² It is also a season when hunting groups split up into even smaller
⁶²¹units, each going its own way, claiming certain honey trees for its
own by marking them with a vine tied around the base or with some
other sign that they know will be respected by all other Pygmies.

Only villagers would be capable of breaking such a trust. And so it
²²²is also a time when the Pygmies tell stories for the benefit of the
¹⁷⁷villagers of the dreadful and dangerous spirits that they have to fight
in order to get the honey. Naturally enough, then, it is a time when
the villagers prefer to leave the Pygmies, and the forest, well alone.

²²² Cephu was already off on his own, slyly camping near the valley
⁶²¹that divides the territory of the Epulu Pygmies from that of the
next group to the west. He had relatives in both groups, and he felt
able to claim trees in both territories, depending on where he thought
he would do best. Those that were left split into two bands. One
set off with Ekianga, far away to the north of Kaweki's fishing camp.
There they hoped to combine good hunting with the honey quest.

• [⁴³⁹] A few made a permanent halfway camp so that they could act as a
convenient relay station between Ekianga and the village, using the
surplus meat to obtain luxuries that would help make the season
even more festive.

²²² Masisi, however, refused to have anything to do with this plan.
⁶²¹ The honey season was no time to be bothered with hunting, he said,
⁵⁷⁸and in any case he was fed up with village food and village tobacco
¹⁷⁷and dirty village water. He wanted to forget about the village and
eat nothing but forest food. He decided on an area that was little
frequented. There was a great deal of dissension among those who

- 133 rolling hills are separated by perennial streams never more than a few miles apart. A pygmy can find water almost anywhere within a hundred yards.
- (312)

NEGRO-PYGMY RELATIONS

433
439
361
177

This forest is inhabited by two kinds of people, Negroes and pygmies, who maintain an almost symbiotic relationship, based on trade. A Negro village may own approximately 100 square miles of forest territory. In this territory are the Negro village and the pygmy village. The former is permanent, in a clearing; the latter is temporary, under the forest trees. In maintaining their relationship, it is the pygmies' job to take in honey and meat, while the Negroes' obligation is to give them plantains. In addition, the pygmies may bring in a certain amount of wild baselli fruit in season, or roofing leaves, or rattan and fibers for net making; in return they may acquire ax blades, knives, and arrowheads from the Negroes.

There is no strict process of barter involved, and no accounting kept, other than through general observation. If the pygmies are stingy, their Negroes will hold back their bananas. If the Negroes are stingy, the pygmies will leave the territory and go to live with other pygmies serving other Negro hosts.

608
571
177

This relationship is interfamilial, between a pygmy family and a Negro family. It is a matter of close personal relations, inherited, on both sides, from father to son. These alliances may change from time to time, but when they do there are usually hard feelings; if a man's pygmy leaves him to serve another host it is a kind of divorce. In the old days, a frequent cause of inter-village warfare among the Negroes was the luring away of each other's pygmies.

177 Before the Belgians stopped inter-
 439 village and intertribal warfare, the
 648 most important single duty of the pygmy was to act as scout and intelligence agent in the forest. As soon as he became aware of a raiding party crossing the boundary of his host's territory he would hotfoot it to the village to give warning. This eternal vigilance on the part of the pygmy was probably of more value to his hosts than the meat that he brought in. Now that the need of this has ceased he is fulfilling only half of his contract; the Negro, who still provides plantains and manufactured objects, is still fulfilling all of his. Still both are satisfied.

177 Ordinarily, the pygmy keeps inside
 439 the territory of his Negro hosts. Individuals and small family groups may
 361 go outside to visit relatives in other
 621 bands, but this causes no disturbance
 648 because the visitors turn in their game to the hosts of the kinsmen whom they are visiting. This constant milling about evens up on the whole, and the number of pygmies in any band at any one time is about the same. There are occasions, however, when the hunters of a band may have a strong reason to pass beyond the landmarks which designate their hosts' territorial boundaries. If there is a lot of game just over the border and no pygmies there to catch it, the pygmies will tell their Negroes, who tell the Negroes owning that part of the forest. An agreement will be made between the two groups of Negroes, and the pygmies will be allowed to take the game, provided that they pay a part of it to the owners of the forest, and another part to their own hosts. This kind of economic treaty, therefore, brings the pygmies of a given band into contact with two groups of Negroes, and may initiate new relationships.

177 When the pygmy camp is close to
 574 the Negro village, some of the pygmies

Mbuti

177
574
[296] may come in every evening. They will leave a couple of old men to stay behind in the camp as guards, smoking hashish, and the rest will go into the village, usually around four o'clock in the afternoon, after the day's hunting is over. From then until dark a few pygmies are usually to be seen hanging about the women's quarters. If a white man arrives, however, they quickly disappear, through fear that he will confiscate their antelope, or any other game that they may have brought with them.

[273] These mass visits are made particularly if it is going to be a moonlit night, and if wine drinking is going on. If there is a moon they will stay and dance; if not, they will come home at dark. The Negroes give them wine in a condescending way, and the pygmies put on what the Negroes consider to be wild, barbaric dances.

• 439
[361] Sometimes the pygmy camp is as much as two days' journey from the village. In this case, the pygmies go in seldom, and browbeat their wives to make them go in to get plantains.

A visitor to a Negro village can nearly always see bunches of plantains lying around on the ground; they have been placed there for the pygmies, who pick them up and carry them home. There is no need for any special bargaining or designation; the pygmies know which bunches are for them.

177
439
571
[251] **Pygmy attitudes toward their Negroes.**—The pygmies consider themselves inseparably attached to their hosts and think it their duty to provide them with meat. Although they feel that they are supposed to turn over all honey and elephant meat, in each case they eat all they can before taking it into the village. They never preserve or store any food. Their duty of feeding the Negroes meat is therefore regarded as somewhat of a nuisance. On the other hand, when the pygmy
[P. 324-A]

Mbuti

Zaire FO1

P
177
• 439
571
[424]

wants something from a Negro, he wheedles and "begs" for it. He may thus "borrow" a mortar, a skin-headed drum for dancing, etc., and will not return it until the Negro comes after it or sends for it. He will not put any of these things under cover, or care for them; he leaves them out in the rain to mildew and rot. The owner has to see that his property is cared for, and this forms a subject on which the Negro can make fun of the pygmy.

The form of this relationship is therefore a grudging duty in the case of giving, and a wheedling begging in the case of receiving. These outer forms fail to reveal the inner feeling of loyalty and affection between the parties concerned, but rather symbolize the existing situation in which the Negro is at the top of the scale and the pygmy at the bottom.

Z
186

Negro attitude toward their pygmies.—The Negroes distinguish four ranks or orders of living beings: people, pygmies, chimpanzees, and other animals. The pygmies are thus considered a species apart, neither human nor animal, but in between. The main point of distinction lies not in their size or physique, but in the fact that the pygmies do no cultivation.

Z
186
563
581
P
581

The Negroes think of their pygmies as barbaric and uncultured, but at the same time they are often fond of them. A Negro may occasionally marry a pygmy woman, and the children are considered real children, complete human beings; they are brought up with the Negro's other children. The Negroes say that pygmy women are good in bed, cheap, and prolific, but that they are useless for women's work—cultivation and cooking. For a pygmy woman it is a great rise in the scale of living to marry a Negro as his second or third wife, despite the fact that pygmy wives are usually the butt of humor from the Negro wives. This is, how-

Z
195
[522]

[P.324-B]

481 lengths of 20 feet or so each from some flexible liana, and passes the first around the tree trunk, which may be as much as six feet thick. Then he sets the second liana in place in the same manner, and passes the two under his shoulders. He sits parallel to the trunk, which he faces, and grips with his feet. While bracing against one liana, he moves the other upward, then braces on it while moving the other. In this way he can climb up the slick, limbless bole of the tree, to where the first limbs branch off, some hundred or more feet above the ground.

When he reaches the first branches, he takes off his lianas and walks along the limbs like a tightrope walker or structural steel worker, free of the limbs, with nothing to hold in his hands. When he has accomplished his mission he comes down again the way he went up.

PYGMY TECHNOLOGY

412
199
439 Basic tools.—The keynote to the simple and specialized pygmy technology is the fact that they do not have to make any of their basic tools, but instead obtain effective iron cutting tools from their Negro hosts. This eliminates much work and the need for much skill in toolmaking, and provides them with more efficient instruments than they could possibly make for themselves at a food-gathering level of technology.

When a pygmy needs an ax he will beg one from his Negro host. Perhaps the Negro will give him a whole ax, haft and all. The blade is a triangular piece of iron, made locally by Negro smiths, and set in a solid wooden handle, adzed out of a larger piece of wood. The handle has a hole which has been burned through it from side to side with a hot iron. Through this

[P 326-A]

- 412 hole goes the narrow end of the ax.
[177] This is essentially a Neolithic type of
[439] hafting.

[313] Perhaps the Negro will give him only the ax head, without a haft. In this case the pygmy will cut down a thin sapling, or a tree branch, just the right thickness, and use it bark and all. He splits this with his knife, at one end. Then he wraps the split and the blade which he has thrust through it with twine or rattan. The pygmy will use the Negro-hafted ax on the ground, but if he is climbing a tree and needs an ax while up there, he will take along one of his own hafting by preference, because it is lighter.

[462] Both men and women use these axes. The women also have knives of their own, of the same manufacture. These knives are about six inches long, leaf-bladed, double edged. The handle is simply a thick tang, twisted, and thus is all one piece with the blade. In some cases, however, small wooden handles are added. The women use these for many purposes—for peeling bananas, and preparing other foods for cooking; to cut monocotyledonous leaves for roofing, and to split the stem. In general, it is the all-purpose woman's tool.

412 The man's knife is larger and single
177 edged, a kind of small machete, made
439 in Germany. The Negroes obtain them from white men by trade and give them to the pygmies. I once tried giving them American machetes, of the kind prized in Central America, but they were too large and too heavy. The men use these machetes for cutting lianas, tree limbs, and so forth. For small woodwork, however, such as whittling an arrow shaft, they are more likely to use an arrowhead or spearhead, which is nearer the right size.

[313] Axes and the two kinds of knives
[322] and arrowheads and spearheads are the only cutting tools the pygmies have or know how to use.

415

177

439

Also obtained from the Negroes are the cooking pots that all pygmy women own, essential for water storage and cooking. These pots are made by Negro women, and by relatively few Negro women at that; pottery making is a specialist occupation.

372

Fire.—The pygmies do not know how to make fire, nor do many of the Negroes with whom they are associated. Throughout all this countryside people keep fires going, and when one fire dies out the people will borrow it from each other. While on the march the pygmies carry glowing embers with them; they can keep a brand lighted for ten miles during a rainstorm. They do this by wrapping the burning ends in green leaves, and swinging it up and down; every two or three minutes they uncover it a bit and blow on it. At night these brands serve as torches. The Negroes have special wood which they use for torches but the pygmies do not. Their firewood is always fallen wood, and therefore always somewhat rotten and punky.

342

462

[824]

Houses.—When the pygmies have chosen a new camp, the women go out into the forest a little way to collect building materials. Each woman brings in a bundle of sticks about half an inch thick, and from three to six feet in length; she also brings a bundle of sarcophrynium leaves. She thrusts the ends of the sticks in the ground around in a circle about five feet in diameter. Then she gets inside the circle, and bends opposite pairs of sticks inward, and ties them together. She does this in the following manner: first she takes a stick in each hand, then she brings them together, then she holds the two with one hand, and wraps with the other.

342

462

476

This technique is not easy; it is much easier if two women work together, and in practice this is usually the case. The first woman, who is to

[R327-A]

224 their activities and in their social or-
621 ganization in particular, since the de-
gree to which cooperation is required in
hunting, and the numbers of people in-
volved, are the principal factors in de-
termining the composition of the band.

224 **Net hunting.**—The technique of net
hunting can best be described by going
through the chronological events of a
single day. The details of where and
how to hunt are decided during the
usual evening conversation period the
night before. The chief argument lies
in the weather; if it is going to be dry
it will be better for net hunting. Since
it will sometimes rain for three days,
then go two days without rain, it is a
matter of some speculation and predic-
tion whether or not it will rain on a
given afternoon. In general the weath-
er permits net hunting, for it usually
does not begin to rain until 4:00 P.M.,
and by that time the pygmies often
have enough game to make the day's
work profitable. The season is also
important, for during the dry season
the fallen leaves crackling underfoot
make such a noise that stalking is hard
even for a tracker so expert as the
pygmy. However, this condition is
good for net hunting, since it is nec-
essary that the game hear the hunters.

224 The men, women, and children start
283 out early in the morning, and the wom-
286 en carry their babies on their backs.
[482] The men carry the nets. These are
[854] made of cordage, about the same width
as tennis nets, but a little longer.
Since the length of the net is functional
in the hunting, the pygmies keep it
fairly constant. As one end rots away
they add onto the other end, until an
old net may eventually be largely re-
placed by these additions. However,
[177] the pygmies prefer new nets made by
[439] the Negroes and, furthermore, there
are rarely enough nets to go around.
Hence they frequently beg their hosts
for more.

[P. 328-B]

2
237
439
435
177
567
ing a double profit. Slavery, therefore, was a by-product of these raids, and not the primary objective, which was to obtain ivory. When the white men came in, they said to the Negroes, "Why deal with these Arab slavers? Sell your ivory to us, and we will leave you alone." Thus, ivory became an important item to the Negroes, and the more they could get of it the better.

P
224
177
439
2
439
563
The pygmy could never, by himself, kill enough elephants to stop them from trampling his host's gardens. He could, however, kill enough to swell his host's supply of ivory and increase his host's capital. So a pygmy who was an elephant hunter became a special favorite of his Negro host and would get special gifts and favors in return for the ivory.

P
411
2
325
The pygmy elephant hunter uses a special spear. Its handle is three to four feet long; its blade is leaf-shaped, of thin iron, about eight inches long and four wide. It is Negro-forged, of soft iron; the pygmy hunter sharpens it on a stone, until it is razor sharp.

P
224
His technique of hunting is daring and simple, and takes as much skill as that of a Spanish matador. He tracks the elephant, which is not difficult, until he knows from the spoor that he is close to it. When he hears the elephant's bowels rumble, he goes along even more quietly, until he sees the elephant through the underbrush. He then approaches the elephant silently, up wind; he jabs his spear as far as he can into the elephant, gashing the belly just behind the ribs; then he pulls it right out again. The elephant at this point usually turns, and the pygmies say that if you as much as wink at this moment you are a dead pygmy.

The man stands stock still, so the elephant can't see him. Then he goes through a sequence of stab and jump and stand still, as many times as he can. Every time the elephant looks
[P. 331-A]

224 get one cut of one animal, another cut of another, depending on what part they played in the capture of each. In any case, even if there is only one animal, everyone will get something to eat. This does not mean that all families eat equally well, however; some have more than others, some better cuts. There is both a reward for special luck and prowess, and a charitable mechanism for those who have shown neither. Sometimes the net hunters catch an okapi; in this case there is enough meat to feed the camp for a week, and everyone eats and eats well.

[622]
[591] The meat is cut up by the man who killed the animal, or anyone who knows the rules. In any case there are always arguments. The man who makes a mistake is cried down; they all know the rules, or think that they know them. Government, as far as distribution of spoils is concerned, is by argument and common consent without specific leadership in any individual—the typical pygmy way of making decisions and ordering events.

[626] In the case of the hunter who catches his animal all alone, without help of any kind, the carcass belongs to him alone. Theoretically, he and his family could eat it all up if he wished, but there is little chance that this would happen; he would not dare face public opinion. He would be labeled a mean man and [439] would suffer for it in the end. It may happen however that he is behind in his gifts to his Negro host. In this case he will take the carcass uncut into the village, to avoid trouble from that quarter, and the other pygmies will not hold this against him, provided that there is other food to eat.

[171] The division of spoils after an elephant hunt follows the same principle as it does among the Indians of Tierra del Fuego or Lower California when a whale washes ashore—regardless of who may be responsible there is a
[P 333-A]